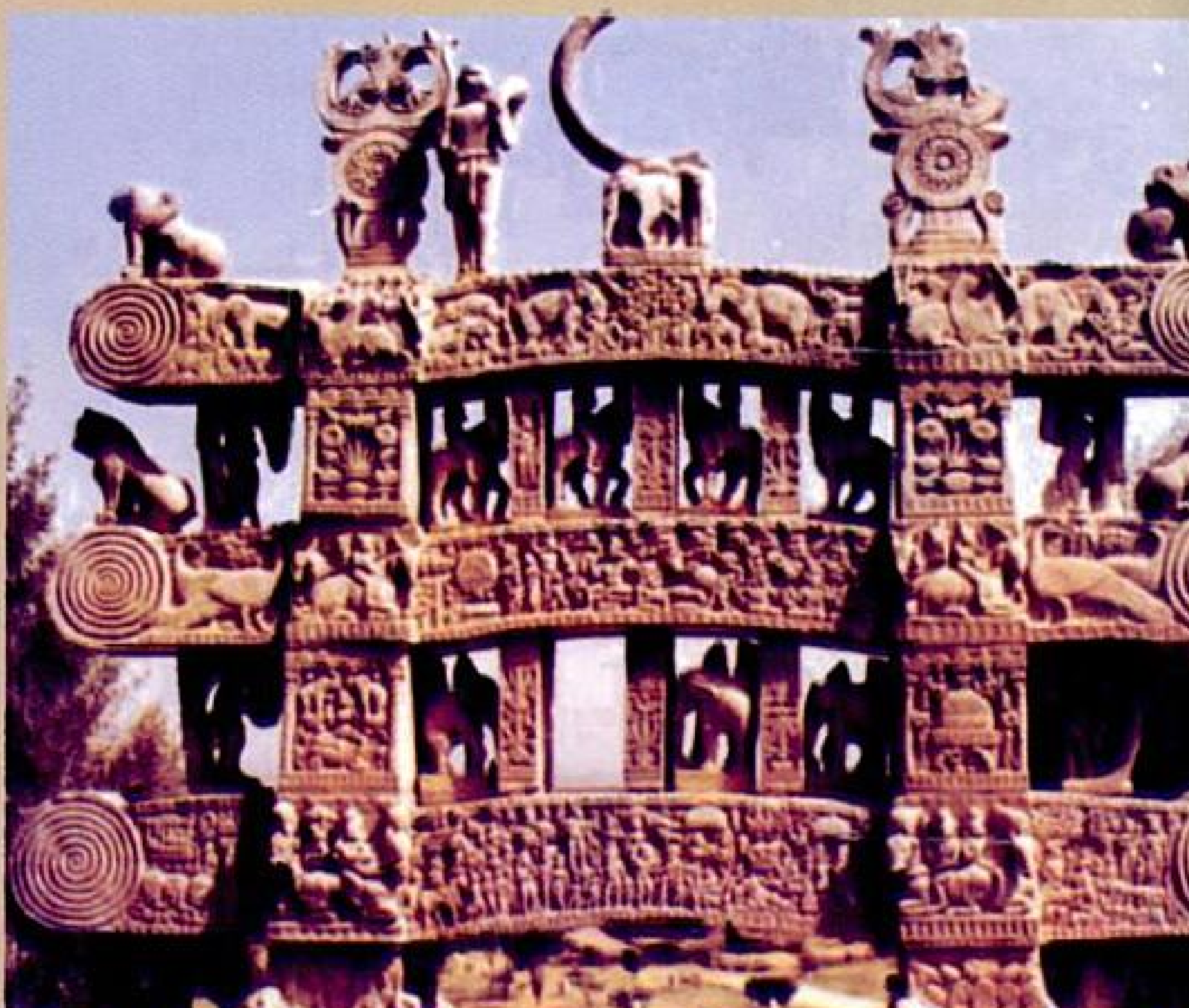
STUDIES IN INDIAN HISTORY

# Madhya Pradesh Through the Ages

STUDIES IN INDIAN HISTORY

VOLUME 4



Editors

S.R. BAKSHI • O.P. RALHAN

This encyclopaedic study has been weaved into four volumes covering various aspects of the region through its ages. The highlights of the theme are socio-economic, cultural and political developments through the ages. Undoubtedly all these volumes have been dealt with in a comprehensive way. Indeed all the events are well-knit and give useful details on the subject.

Volumes I to IV cover the land and the people and all useful details which are meant for teachers, social scientists researchers, parliamentarians, statesmen and students in India and abroad. Efforts have been made to fill up gaps with the help of writings of eminent authors. We are grateful to them.

**Rs. 4500/- (Set of 4 Volumes)**

**STUDIES IN INDIAN HISTORY**

# Madhya Pradesh Through The Ages

Volume – 4

## Social Revolution Towards Swaraj

**STUDIES IN INDIAN HISTORY**

# MADHYA PRADESH THROUGH THE AGES

Volume – 4

## SOCIAL REVOLUTION TOWARDS SWARAJ

**S. R. Bakshi**
**O. P. Ralhan**

**Sarup & Sons**
New Delhi - 110002

Published by
**Sarup & Sons**
4740/23, Ansari Road
Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002
Tel. : 23281029, 23244664, 41010989
Fax : 011-23277098
E-mail : sarupandsonsin@hotmail.com.

*Madhya Pradesh Through the Ages*
*Social Revolution Towards Swaraj*
*Volume – 4*



1st Published 2007
ISBN 81-7625-806-7 (Set)

Printed in India
Published by Prabhat Kumar Sharma for Sarup & Sons,
Laser Typesetting at Chitra Computers and
Printed at Mehra Offset Printers, Delhi.

# Contents

# Preface

The history of central provinces, now called Madhya Pradesh, has deep bearing on socio-economic, cultural, religious and political aspects of a long period. It gives us a comprehensive outlook and make us weave a readable story of the period in question. The Marathas, Pindarics and other races have been dealt with in several ways. We assess this period in various ways and can do justice to numerous socio-economic and political aspects.

The encyclopaedia has been divided into four volumes which depicts the comprehensive glimpse of central India in its several phases.

Volume I has bearing on land and the people and contain Jamuna and Godavari, the hidden treasure, wealth, including plants, the C.P. Legislative Assembly and role of Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla, law and order, D. P. Mishra and his career and last but not the least the revenue settlements.

Volume II has deep bearing on Pindarics and Marathas of the vast land of Central India. The role and growth of Pindarics, military, operations against them and Maratha's rule in Malwa have been depicted in this volume.

Volume III deals with society and economy in Madhya Bharat, administrative machinery of Paramaras and religious traditions.

Volume IV Social Revolution towards Swaraj, which has deep bearing on various phases of Bhopal. The struggle of the people has been highlighted.

We have collected the material from several institutions, viz. the Sapru House Library, Delhi University Library, Nehru Memorial

Museum and Library, Central Secretariat Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, Indian Council of Historical Research Library, Jamia Millia Islamia Library and Sahitya Akademi Library, and feel beholden to the members of these centres of research for their support during our researches. We have used the relevant material from the writings of eminent authors to fill up the gaps. We are thankful to them.

These volumes would be useful for teachers, research scholars and students in India and abroad.

# 1

# Socio-Political Ideology

### Congress Approach to International Affairs

Even before independence the Indian National Congress had evolved a distinct international policy and stood for certain fundamental principles in the field of international affairs. After independence, Jawaharlal Nehru who was the main architect of Congress Foreign Policy became the Prime Minister of India and continued to take India towards an independent policy in international affairs which was guided by the main considerations of peace and freedom for all nations of the world.

Pandit Nehru gave a sincere expression to the feelings of fighters for India's independence when on the eve of our independence he said in the Constituent Assembly: "And so we have to labour and to work and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. These dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the Nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments." Again in his message to the Press on our Independence on 15th August 1947 Pandit Nehru said: "To the nations and peoples of the World we send greetings and pledge ourselves to cooperate with them in furthering peace, freedom and democracy."

### World View of Nehru

Even while the Indian National Congress was fighting for national liberation Pandit Nehru made the Congressmen conscious

of international trends and their implications for India. He used to view the Indian problems in the context of developments in the world.

As early as in February, 1927 while representing the Indian National Congress at the congress of the oppressed nationalities which had representatives of the oppressed people of Asia, Africa, Europe and America Pandit Nehru told the Press: "We realise that there is much in common in the struggle which various subject and semi-subject and oppressed peoples are carrying on today. Their opponents are the same...The Indian National Congress is necessarily national and has nationalism as its basis, but as our great leader Mahatma Gandhi has said, our nationalism is based on the most intense internationalism." In the congress he said: "I would like you to understand that the Indian problem is not only a national problem, but it directly affects a great number of other countries and it is of world interest, because it directly applies to the greatest and the most influential imperialism of our time."

Up to the end of the First World War the Congress attitude, though expressing some differences at some places, may be said to be of loyality to the British Crown. In Madras in 1914 the Indian National Congress conveyed to "His Majesty the King Emperor and the people of England its profound devotion to the Throne, its unswerving allegiance to the British connections and its firm resolve to stand by the Empire, at all hazards and at all costs". From 1915 to 1918 in successive resolutions the Congress prayed for the success of the Allies with faith in the righteousness of the cause espoused by them.

At Delhi Session of 1918 the Congress passed a resolution urging "that in Justice to India, it should be represented by an elected representative or representatives to the same extent as self-governing Dominions at any conference that may be held to deliberate on or settle the terms of peace or reconstruction" and elected Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Mr. M. K. Gandhi and Mr. Syed Hasan Imam for the purpose in anticipation of the request being acceded to by the British. This simple request was not accepted by the British.

In 1919 at the Amritsar Session the Congress protested "against the hostile attitude of some of the British Ministers towards the Turkish question" and appealed to the British Government "to settle the Turkish question in accordance with the just and legitimate sentiments of the Indian Musalmans." Thus for the first time Indian leadership to direct interest in a foreign event

After this the Congress took increasing interest in foreign affairs. The Congress found a feeling of kinship with other countries who were also giving a flight to the British imperialism. The Nagur Congress in 1920 paid "its homage to the sacred memory of the great Irish patriot Mac-Swiney" and sent "its message of sympathy to the Irish people in their struggle for independence."

**First Foreign Policy Resolution**

In 1921 at the A.I. C. C. Session in Delhi, the Congress for the first time adopted a resolution on foreign policy. This resolution declared that the interests of the Nationalist India in the field of foreign policy were opposed to those of Britain.

In the following years the Congress expressed the feelings of the Indian people towards foreign events in various resolutions without regard to the British attitude to the subject or to British action. In successive sessions at Ahmedabad (1921), Gaya (1922) and Delhi Special Session (1923) the Congress pledged India's support to the Turkish people and congratulated Kamal Pasha on his victorious leadership and hailed it as the "sure presage of...the freedom of the nations of the East" (Delhi Special Session 1923). In Belgaum in 1924 the All India Congress Committee expressed "sympathy to the Egyptians in their troubles" and hoped that they would "rise superior to the terrorism" then "set up in their land". In 1927 in Madras Session the Congress supported the people of China "in their fight for emancipation", and resented use of troops for furthering 'Imperialist designs" as the Chinese people were "the comrades of the Indian people in their joint struggle against imperialism". The Congress also condemned the action of the government "in refusing passports to the medical mission which the All India Congress Committee wanted to send to China".

In another resolution in Madras Session the Congress declared "that the people of India have no quarrel with their neighbours and desired to live at peace with them", and asserted the "right to determine whether or not they take part in any way".

In the Calcutta Session held in the following year 1928 the Congress declared "that the struggle of the Indian people for freedom is a part of the general world struggle against imperialism". The Congress congratulated the people of China "on their having attained their full and complete freedom" and for "their having ended the era of foreign domination". Similarly the Congress sent warmest greetings to the people of Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq and assured them of full sympathy in their struggle for emancipation from the grip of "Western Imperialism". The Congress Session also decided to send a representative to the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism. The Congress reiterated the view that "the people of India have no quarrel with the neighbouring states or the other nations of the world and they will not permit themselves to be exploited by England to further her imperialist aims." By another resolution a Pan-Asiatic Federation's first session was sought to be summoned in India in 1930. These resolutions give the first clear indications that the Congress leadership was thinking in terms of a Pan-Asian movement to resist European imperialism. However, interestingly enough it was only after nineteen years that the first Asian Relations Conference was held in Delhi in March 1947.

**Four Basic Principles**

Thus by 1928 Calcutta Session the four basic principles of Congress foreign policy may be said to have been established, viz (a) opposition to Imperialism and colonial rule, (b) active sympathy and support to people fighting for independence, (c) opposition to war and devotion to peace, and (d) avoiding foreign entanglements for India. However, obviously there are inextricably linked up with each other. The Congress recognised these four principles as integral part of any foreign policy aiming at prosperity for the entire human race.

In Wardha the Working Committee in 1936 sent "its greetings and its full sympathy to the Arabs of Palestine in their struggle for independence against British Imperialism". In the same year in Lucknow Session the Congress while expressing sympathy for the Ethiopian people in their heroic fight "against imperialist aggression" considered "Abyssinia's fight as part of the fight of all exploited nation for freedom". The Congress while sending greetings to World Peace Congress thought of the world peace as the one based on national and social freedom and said "The Congress is convinced that such a peace can only be established on an enduring basis when the causes of war are removed and the domination and exploitation of nation by nation is ended". Again at Faizpur in the same year the Congress said: "The Congress wishes to emphasise that imperialism itself is a continuing cause of war and its elimination is essential in the interests of world peace."

The Indian National Congress was noting with concern the rise of totalitarian systems in the form of Fascism and Nizism in Europe. The Congress leadership realised the dangers of Fascism and Nizism much earlier than the statement of Europe, and also the fact that fascism was fundamentally akin to imperialism. In Faizpur the Congress sent greetings to the Spanish people and the assurance of their solidarity with them in their great struggle for liberty. The Congress objected to Indian manpower and resources being used to serve British imperialism in the event of a war.

**Medical Mission to China**

In 1937 in Calcutta, the All India Congress Committee condemned Japanese aggression in the China and assured the Chinese people of Indian people's "solidarity with them in their struggle for maintaining their freedom". The Committee further called upon the Indian people to boycott Japanese goods "as a mark of sympathy with the people of China". These sentiments were repeated in Haripura Session in 1933. The Congress also sent a Medical Mission to China.

Similarly the All India Congress Committee at Calcutta in 1937 emphatically protested against "reign of terror" established in Palestine by British Imperialism.

Similar sentiments were expressed at Haripura Congress in 1938 where "The Congress" expressed full sympathy with the Arabs in their struggle for national freedom and their fight against British imperialism. In !939 in Tripuri the Congress expressed "full sympathy with the Arabs in Palestine in their struggle for national freedom and their fight against British imperialism" and added that "while sympathising with the plight of the Jews in Europe and elsewhere, the Congress deplores that in Palestine the Jews have relied on British armed forces to advance their special privileges and thus aligned themselves on the side of British imperialism" and suggested amicable settlement between Jews and Arabs and direct cooperation.

In 1938 in Haripura Congress stated "afresh the policy of the Indian people in regard to foreign relations and war". The Congress reiterated, 'The people of India desire to live in peace and friendship with their neighbours and with all other countries, and for this purpose wish to remove all causes of conflict between them....In order to establish world peace on an enduring basis imperialism and the exploitation of one people by another must end". The Congress added "During the past few years there has been a raid and deplorable deterioration in international relations, fascist aggression has increased and an unabashed defiance of international obligations has become the avowed policy of fascist powers. British foreign policy, in spite of its evasions and indecision, has consistently supported the fascist powers in Germany, Spain and the Far East and must therefore, largely shoulder the responsibility for the progressive deterioration of the world situation....It is helping in the drift to imperialist world war. India can be no party to such an imperialist war and will not permit her manpower and resources to be exploited in the interests of British imperialism. Nor can India join any war without the express consent of the people...In the event of an attempt being made to involve India in a war, this will be resisted".

In the Tripuri Session in 1939 the Congress expressed disapproval of British foreign policy. "The Congress records its entire disapproval of British Foreign Policy culminating in the Munich Pact, the Anglo-Italian Agreement and the recognition of rebel Spain. This policy has been one of deliberate betrayal of

democracy, repeated breach of pledges...and cooperation with governments which are avowed enemies of democracy and freedom...the world has witnessed with horror the organised terrorism of the Nazi Government against people of the Jewish race...The Congress dissociates itself entirely from British foreign policy which has consistently aided the fascist owners and helped in the destruction of democratic countries. The Congress is opposed to imperialism and fascism alike and is convinced that world peace and progress required the ending of both of these. In th opinion of the Congress it is urgently necessary for Indian to direct her own foreign policy as an independent nation thereby keeping aloof from both imperialism and fascism and pursuing her path of peace and freedom."

In August 1939, the Working Committee defined the Congress stand. "In this world crisis the sympathies of the Working Committee are entirely with the people who stand for democracy and freedom. The Congress has repeatedly condemned fascist aggression in Europe, Africa and the Far East of Asia as well as the betrayal of democracy by British Imperialism in Czechosolvakia and Spain. The past policy of the British Government as well as the recent developments, demonstrate abundantly that the Government does not stand for freedom and democracy and may at any time betray these ideals."

**Disapproval of Fascism and Nazism**

After the declaration of War in September, 1939 the Working Committee passed a comprehensive resolution insisting that only an independent Indian can join wholeheartedly in prosecuting the war. In this historic resolution it declared its "Entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit...It has seen in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principles of imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore, unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it. The issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people...Any

imposed decision will necessarily have to be opposed by them....Their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her...The history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the spoken world, the ideals proclaims and the real motive and objectives." The resolution spoke of the breaking of the promises made during the First World War and of how Britain had connived at and acquiesced in the aggression on Manchuria, Ethiopia, Spain and Czechoslovakia."

**Indictment of Imperialism**

It was a real indictment of the British Imperialism. Referring to the War, the Working Committee said; "If the war is to defend the status quo, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privileges, then Indian can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it...If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy then she must end imperialism in her own possessions...A free, democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations or mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation."

The Working Committee also declared "that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But hey have a deep rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace. But to a victory of real democracy for all the peoples of all countries and a world freedom from the night-mare of violence and imperialist oppression."

**Gandhian Approach**

These words really express our approach to all international issues even today. They are a proper expression of Gandhian ideology as applied to international problems.

Subsequently, as is well-known, the statement by the Viceroy was found unsatisfactory and the Congress Ministries in various

provinces resigned in protest. This was followed by some forms of *Satyagraha* against the Government, and ultimately by the 'Quit India' resolution of 1942. However, the Congress meeting in Allahabad in 1939 had already clearly said: "The Congress has looked upon the war crisis and the problems it raises as essentially a moral issue, and has not sought to profit by it in any spirit of bargaining."

Various resolutions passed by the Congress annual sessions, by the AICC and the Working Committee about war crisis clearly laid down India's independent foreign policy based on (a) total opposition all forms of imperialism, colonial rule and dictatorship. (b) the utter futilify of war as a means of settling international problems, and (c) the dependent of lasting world peace on ending of exploitation of man by man. In June, 1940 the Working Committee said "It (the war) has shown beyond a doubt that warfare cannot lead to peace and freedom, and the choice before the world is utmost degradation and destruction through warfare or the way of peace and non-violence on a basis of freedom for all people."

In December, 1941 meeting in Bardoli the Congress Working Committee expressed admiration for Russia "The Soviet Union has stood for certain human, cultural and social values which are of great importance to the growth and progress of humanity. The Working Committee consider that it would be a tragedy if the cataclysm of war involved the destruction of this endeavour and achievement." This resolution passed in the presence of Mahatma Gandhi is of interest if one compares it with the anti-Russia hysteria sought to be built up the Syndicate in collaboration with Jan Sangh and the Swatantra parties.

**Post-War Situation**

After the end of war the Working Committee meeting at Simla in July, 1945 welcoming the coming into being of the U.N.O. regretted "that the position allotted to the smaller nations in the charter is one lacking all effectiveness and the Great Powers not only dominate and completely control the new organisation but are placed above and beyond the law they have themselves helped in framing...According to the Charter as framed the world organisation

will only be effective when none of the Great Powers are interested in the dispute. Where there is such an interest, as there is likely to be in most international disputes, a Great Power veto will prevent any action being taken." One cannot but feel proud, about the foresight of our leaders when one sees how prophetic their views were about the working of the veto in the U.N.O. The Working Committee asserted that "a full and frank recognition of national independence, within the framework of the international order of colonial territories is necessary to give reality to the purpose and objectives of the new organisation and to lay the foundations of a stable peace."

In September, 1945 in Bombay the A.I.C.C. said: "Civilisation is likely to destroy itself unless it gives up its imperialist and acquisitive tendencies and bases itself on the peaceful cooperation of free nations and on the maintenance of the dignity of man. The end of the war has brought no freedom to the colonial and dependent countries, and the imperialist powers are again engaged in the old contest for domination over others".

**Support to Freedom Movements**

At the same meeting the A.I.C.C. lent strong support to the freedom movements in South East Asia and decried attempts by imperialist powers to re-impose their rule in the area. "The A.I.C.C. views with anxiety the attempts that are being made to maintain the political and economic subjection of Burma, Malayan, Indo-China and Indonesia. To continue imperialist domination over these countries under whatever name or guise, would be a denial and repudiation of the professions made by the United Nations during war time and would sow the seeds of future wars. India, desiring the freedom of all Asiatic as well as other countries, would deeply resent the continuation of an imperialist policy in South Eas Asia".

In December, 1943 the Working Committee expressed: "the heart-felt sympathy with the Indonesian and Indo-Chinese nationalists for the enormous loss and suffering inflicted upon them by the imperialist powers" and noted "with resentment that the Government of India has not granted necessary facilities to enable Jawaharlal Nehru to proceed to Java in response to Dr. Seokarno's invitation".

In March 1946, in Bombay the Working Committee said. "Imperialist Policy has to be discarded not only in the interests of subject nations but also to rid the world of the peril that might overwhelm humanity. It has thus become urgently necessary to end foreign domination over the countries of Asia and Africa and for foreign armies to be withdrawn from all such countries, and notably from Indonesia, Manchuria, Indo-China, Iran an Egypt."Thus one can see that the demand made in the recent Delhi A.I. C.C. in 1970 of withdrawal of all foreign forces from Indo-China is in consonance with Congress Foreign Policy for a long time.

The Congress in 1946, at Meerut said, "The end of the World War has not brought peace to the world...Civilization is likely to destroy itself unless it gives up its imperialist and acquisitive tendencies and bases itself on the cooperation of free nations and on the maintenance of the dignity of the man".

The Congress in the same Session sent "greetings to the Republic of Indonesia and its congratulations to the people of Indonesia on the success which has attended their gallant struggle for freedom." The Congress assured them "of the goodwill of the Indian people and their desire to cooperate in the fullest measure with the people of Indonesia in the promotion of the freedom and advancement of the nations and peoples of Asia."

Thus India became free in August 1947 with the determination to try its level best to end colonialism in all forms and to strive for ending exploitation of a nation by another nation and of man by man.

**After Independence**

After attaining Independence on 15th August, 1947 the Indian National Congress and the Congress Government continued to follow the broad policies laid down by successive Congress Sessions and other Congress bodies. Naturally after Congress being in government the language of resolutions had to undergo some change as Pandit Nehru said in Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on March 8, 1948, "Naturally we cannot as we cannot as a Government go as far as we might have done as a non-official organisation in which we can express our opinions as frankly and as

aggressively as possible. Speaking as a Government we have to moderate our language".

However, so far as our policies were concerned in the same speech Pandit Nehru categorically declared "I do not think that anything could be more injurious to us from any point of view—certainly from an idealistic and high moral point of view, but equally so from the point of view of opportunism and national interest in the narrowest sense of the world—than for us to give up the policies that we have pursued, namely, those of standing up for certain ideals in regard to the oppressed nations, and try to align ourselves with this great power or that an become its camp followers in the hope that some crumbs might fall down their table". Thus the Congress clearly declared its determination to follow the foreign policy which was declared during freedom struggle and not to severe from those ideals.

**Progressive Orientation**

In the 1948 Congress Session at Jaipur—the first to be held after independence—the Congress passed a resolution on 'Foreign Policy" clearly expressing our approach in international affairs. The Congress said" "The National Congress has, even while it was struggling for the freedom of India, associated itself with progressive movements and struggles for freedom in other countries. India's liberation was viewed as a part of the larger freedom of all the countries and peoples of the world. In particular, the Congress has stood in the past for the ending of all imperialist domination and colonial exploitation of any country or people, and has opposed Fascism and all other tendencies which suppress human spirit." The Congress reiterated its acceptance of principles of foreign policy evolved by the Congress before independence. "The foreign policy of India must necessarily be based on the principles that have guided the Congress in past years. These principles are promotion of world peace, the freedom of all nations, racial equality and ending of Imperialism and colonialism. In particular the Congress is interested in the freedom of nations and peoples of Asia and Africa who have suffered under various forms of colonialism for many generations."

**Attitude Towards U. N. O.**

As regards U.N.O. the Congress said, "With a view to advance the cause of world peace and cooperation, India associated herself with the United Nations. This Congress declares its full adherence to the principles underlying the Charter of the United Nations". The Congress and India have taken full interests making U.N.O. succeed in maintaining World Peace or at least containing international armed conflicts whenever and wherever they arose. In almost every Congress Session while passing resolutions on Foreign Policy the Congress took cognizance of the country's role U.N.O. This role has always been an independent one directed awards world peace, ending of colonialism and racialism in all forms and bringing of prosperity to the people of the countries in the world.

**Non-Alignment**

Similarly the Congress expressed the determination to remain outside military blocs and not to align with any power group. The resolution said "It should be the constant aim of the foreign policy of Indian to maintain friendly and co-operative relations with all nations and to avoid entanglement in military or similar alliances which tend to divide up the world in rival groups and thus endanger world peace". The same view was expressed by the Prime Minister of India Pandit Nehru on March 8, 1949 in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) when he said: "We have stated repeatedly that our foreign policy is one of keeping aloof from the big blocks of nations—rival blocks—and being friendly to all countries and not becoming entangled in any alliances, military or other that might drag us into any possible conflict...as a matter of fact we have strictly followed the policy of not getting entangled in any kind of commitment, certainly not military commitment with any other power or group of Powers and we propose to adhere to that policy, because we are quite convinced that that is the only possible policy for us at present and in the future. That does not on the other hand involve any lack of close relationships with other countries...".

**Relations with the Commonwealth**

As regards India's relations with the Commonwealth Jaipur Session said: "India, however, desires to maintain all such links with other countries as do not come in the way of her freedom of action and independence and the Congress would welcome her free association with the independent nations of the Commonwealth for their common welfare and the promotion of world peace". This view was emphatically adopted by Pandit Nehru in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on March 8, 1949 when especially mentioning the Jaipur Session of the Indian National Congress he said: "...the question (India's possible relationship with the Commonwealth) was considered by the National Congress at its Jaipur Session and in broad lines they also laid down the policy to be pursued. As far as we are concerned, we propose strictly to adhere to this directions....What I am placing before the House today is this that our policy in regard to this matter is going to be strictly determined by the Jaipur Congress resolution". This is also an expression of Pandit Nehru's approach to Congress resolutions on Foreign Policy which he considered as 'directions' and he wanted India's foreign policy being 'strictly determined' by them.

In may 1949 at Dehradun A.I. C.C. approved continuance of India in the Commonwealth and said, "The Committee is of opinion that this action is in accordance with the directive given in the Foreign Policy resolution of the Jaipur Congress and that it maintains the full sovereign independence of the Indian Republic while at the same time keeping the free association of India with other Commonwealth countries in a new conception of the Commonwealth which in no way interferes with the sovereignty and freedom of action of each member country".

**Concern for Neighbouring Countries**

In Jaipur Session Congress expressed special interest in Asian Nations. The resolution said: "India is concerned with her neighbour countries of Asia and the Congress trusts that closer bonds of fellowship and co-operative effort for the maintenance of the freedom of Asian nations and their progress will be developed". This has been the Congress approach throughout. Pandit Nehru put this

approach in a very telling fashion when he said, "Naturally India is interested in Asian countries even more than in the rest of the world" [Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Dec. 4. 1947.] At Jaipur Session of 1948 the Congress also passed a resolution against racial discrimination in South Africa and another resolution against continuance of foreign possessions in India. The Congress in yet another resolution about Indonesia said, "It is a matter of utmost concern to India that Indonesia should attain her full freedom and take her rightful part in Asian and international affairs."

The India National Congress continued deep interest in International Affairs. In every Session till the Jaipur Congress Session of 1966 the Congress discussed and passed resolutions on our Foreign Policy. Only in the three recent sessions in Hyderabad, Faridabad and Bombay, this tradition was broken. But the Delhi A.I. C. C. Session of 1970 again took up and passed a resolution on Foreign Affairs in accordance with our traditions.

Nasik Session of 1950 approvingly referred to the fact that India has avoided any entanglement in military or other alliances which tend to divide the world into rival groups and thus endanger world peace. She has maintained her freedom of action in foreign affairs and in the economic development of the country". About Korea the Congress said, "The Congress approves of the policy pursued by the Government of India and is of opinion that every avenue of peaceful settlement should be explored".

The Congress reiterated the Jaipur resolution on foreign possessions.

The Session also approved the Indo-Pakistan Agreement of 8th April, 1950.

In the next Session in Delhi in 1951 the Congress reaffirmed the Nasik Congress resolution on Foreign Policy. The resolution approved the policy of "seeking friendly relations with all countries and avoiding any entanglement in military or other alliances which tend to divide the world into rival groups and thus endanger world peace".

The Congress "approved of the decision of the Government of India...to have a separate treaty with Japan".

The Congress while deeply regretting "the continuing tension between India and Pakistan, which injures both countries and poisons their relationship" said that "the Congress would welcome a peaceful settlement of all Indo-Pakistan problems".

The A.I.C.C. in meetings at Calcutta and Indore in 1952 expressed warmest sympathy to the people of Tunjisia and of other countries of North Africa in their struggle for national freedom.

### Policy of Peace and International Co-operation

In Hyderabad Session in 1953 among other subjects Congress said, "Colnialism, inevitably accompanied by race hatred and conflict, exploitation and international rivalry, is a continuing cause of war and human misery and should be ended". As regards the Government policy of non-alignment the Congress said, "The Congress records its appreciation of and support to the Government of India in pursuing steadfastly, unhindered by setbacks, inducements and provocations, the policy of peace and international co-operation, and non-alignment with Power Blocs, and urges the Government to continue to pursue this course which alone enables it to make a positive contribution towards international understanding and world peace. It records its appreciation of the peace efforts of Government of India in regard to the Korean war, which were non-partisan and based on international law".

### Against Colonialism

In the next Session in 1954 in Kalyani the Congress expressed appreciation of Government of India's policy in Korea. In another resolution the Congress condemned colonialism and racial discrimination. The resolution said: "The Congress throughout its long history has stood for the freedom of all countries, and more especially for the elimination of colonial domination and racial discrimination". It had therefore welcomed the achievement of freedom by many Asian countries. As regards non-alignment the Congress declared: 'The Congress reiterates its conviction that India must continue to follow an independent policy in international affairs and not align herself with any group of nations against any other group."

By another resolution the Congress expressed concern over U.S. military aid to Pakistan. The Congress said, "the intervention of great and powerful country in the shape of military aid, whatever the motives of such aid might be, necessarily leads to grave and far reaching consequences which affect the whole of South Asia, and more particularly India...The area of potential war would spread and fresh conflicts may arise". The correctness of the assessment was proved in 1965 when depending on modern sophisticated military hardware provided by the United States Pakistan launched an attack on India, of course, to be repulsed by patriotic troops of India.

**Approval of the Bandung Conference Decisions**

In the next Session at Avadi in 1955, the Congress regretted the establishment of the "South East Asian Defence Organisation" as it "added to the insecurity of the region and extended the area of Cold War". The Congress welcomed the five principles of '*Panch Shila*'. The continued exclusion of China from U.N.O. was also regretted.

At Berhampur in 1955 the A.I C.C. approved the decisions of the Bandung Conference.

At Amritsar Session in 1956 the Congress recorded appreciation of 'Panch Shila' and welcomed admission of sixteen new countries to U.N. membership. The Congress welcomed Sudan as an independent sovereign Republic. The Congress reaffirmed "the basic policy of India not to align herself with any power block and to work for peace through friendship of all nations".

In Bombay in 1956 the A.I.C.C. said "The Committee regrets the reference to Kashmir in recent meetings in Karachi and Teheran of the SEATO and the Baghdad Pact organisations. This concerns the integrity and the sovereign rights of India". The A.I.C.C. in another resolution rejoiced at the conclusion of the Treaty of Cession of the French settlement in India.

At the next meeting in 1956 at Calcutta A.I.C.C. expressed "strong resentment and disapproval of the invasion of Egypt by Israel and the armed action taken by the United Kingdom and France against Egypt with a view to impose their will". Similarly the A.I.C.C. hoped "that the foreign troops in Hungary will be

withdrawn and the people of Hungary decide their own future by peaceful methods".

The Indore Session in 1957 endorsed this A.I. C. C. resolution and said 'The Congress adheres firmly to its policy of non-alignment and friendship with all nations and express its conviction again that international affairs should be governed by the principle of Panch Shila."

## The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence

In the next Session at Gaughati in 1958 the Congress noted "with satisfaction that the Declaration of the United Nations adopted on the 14th December, 1957 embodies and affirms the Five Principles of Co-existence, known as *Panchseel*, and points to the need of reducing world tensions and of peaceful approaches to international problems". The Congress reiterated "its support for the colonial peoples of all dependent territories who are struggling for their independence".

At Nagpur Session in 1959 the Congress supported the foreign policy of the Congress Government and regretted "that no substantial advance has yet been made in respect of world disarmament". The Congress welcomed "emergence of Guinea as an independent Sovereign Republic" and declared full sympathy to Algria and Cyprus "in their struggle for National Independence".

In 1960 at Bhavanagar the Congress in the Resolution on International Affairs among other things viewed with concern "the continued deterioration of International situation" and welcomed "the decision of the United Nations on colonialism thus demanding the end of Colonialism forthwith".

## Independent Path

In 1962 Bangalore the Congress reaffirmed "its faith in India's policy of non-alignment and avoidance of military alliances". The Congress deplored "the continuance of the policies of racial segregation and discrimination in certain parts of Africa".

In 1961 at Patna the Congress resolution on International Affairs said "The policy based on the respect and sovereignty of

nations, the determination to maintain our national independence, non-alignment in respect of power blocs and military alliances, the ending of colonialism and the settlement of International disputes by negotiations and peaceful methods, has been found to be correct and wise." The Congress supported "the Government in its policy in regard to our neighbouring States, Pakistan and China, who continue to be in illegal and forcible occupation of our territories. The Congress considers that consistent with India's basic policy and methods, the Government should seek all avenues of peaceful settlement, and approves to the policy of Government, aiming at the vacation of all aggression".

Unfortunately while India was seeking "all avenues of peaceful settlement" in the same year China attacked India.

In 1963 at Jaipur, A.I.C.C. reiterated its full support for the foreign policy of the Government. The A.I.C.C. stated "that our present accentuate defence preparations are in no way inconsistent or contrary to our dedication to world peace...In the present context of armed threats to our country's integrity and independence and the continued aggression on our territory by our neighbours China and Pakistan. It is duty of our people and country and for the cause of world peace itself, to be prepared to prevent and foil aggression and not to render it gainful to others". The A.I.C.C. endorsed Government's acceptance of Colombo proposals.

**The Bhubaneswar Session**

At Bhubaneswar Session in 1964 the Congress in the Resolution on International Affairs said "The policies of non-alignment, peaceful co-existence and support of human rights and freedom have won increasing appreciation even among many aligned countries. Non-alignment is regarded as a helpful and constructive force in the lowering of world tensions and in the containment of the area of the cold war itself. In each country in the context of its national circumstances and orientation, non-alignment in varying forms has now been universally adoptted by the newly liberated countries of Asia and Africa". The Congress welcomed the attaining of independence of Kenya and Zanzibar. The Congress also welcomed the project of convening a conference of non-aligned nations.

The Congress reiterated "its full support of the foreign policy of our Government for world peace and cooperation and their endeavours to that end by the pursuit of peaceful co-existence, the policy of non-alignment countries and the opposition to colonialism and racialism".

This resolution made an addition to our foreign policy of the concept of solidarity of non-aligned nations.

This was the last resolution passed under the dynamic guidance of Pandit Nehru who virtually guided and enunciated the Congress Foreign Policy from 1927 onwards.

**Realistic Approach**

Some people have called the Congress Policy during this period as too idealistic. This is far from the truth. Pandit Nehru was a realist and his first concern was national interest. On 4th Dec., 1947 in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Pandit Nehru said: "We propose to look after India's interests in the context of world co-operation and world peace". The emphasis is on India's interests. Similarly in the same speech he said: "We are not going to join a war if we can help it: and we are going to join the side which is to our interest when the time comes to make the choice. There the matter ends". He also said that "ultimately, foreign policy is the outcome of economic policy". Thus he was conscious that the foreign policy should serve the cause of country's economic development. This was also categorically expressed at Jaipur in November, 1963 by the A. I. C. C. "The foreign policy of a nation is primarily based on maintaining its freedom and integrity and in encouraging the prosperity of its people".

In the only session of the Congress held during the Prime Ministership of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri at Durgapur in January, 1965 the Congress reaffirmed "its determination to continue to pursue the policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence which in the context of recent changes in the international situation, has an ever-widening and constructive role to play in the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security". The Congress decided "to pursue the objective of general and complete disarmament including prohibition of the use of nuclear energy of non-peaceful purposes".

**The Tashkent Declaration**

The Indo-Pakistan War followed and Tashkent Declaration was signed on January 10, 1966.

At Jaipur Session in February 1966 the Congress welcomed the Tashkent Declaration as paving "the way to enduring peace, just and honourable to both countries and said: "Faithfully implemented, the Tashkent Declaration will contribute to the happiness and prosperity of the 600 million people of Indo-Pakistan, subcontinent". Thus the emphasis was on human happiness. However the expectations from Tashkent Declaration have not been fulfilled.

In June, 1970 in A. I. C. C. passed a Resolution on Foreign Policy. The resolution emphasised that "The foreign relations of a country are aimed at maintaining its freedom and integrity and promoting the prosperity of its people". The Congress policy of non-alignment was reiterated. As regards Indo-China the Congress wanted withdrawal of all foreign forces and that "The people of Indo-China should be enabled to decide their future without any interference from outside".

For West Asia Congress suggested the implementation of the Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1967. Happily the situation in West Asia in moving is that direction and there is cease-fire in the area.

The Congress advocated, "the peaceful settlement of Indo-Pakistan differences bilaterally".

As regards China the Congress "advocated peaceful solution of differences...which could bring back the Indian territory illegally occupied by China".

The Congress reiterated 'its conviction that the task of enduring peace in the world cannot be completed without...the elimination of the wild gulf that separates the developed and the developing countries of the world". Thus, the Congress rightly laid emphasis on enduring Peace being impossible of achievement without ending dire poverty among developing nations of the world.

The Congress wanted "the world community to give immediate attention to the elimination of these evils of colonialism and racialism."

**Conclusion**

Thus one can note following features of Congress Foreign Policy:

(1) The Congress has been and is the only party in India with a distinct foreign policy.

(2) The Congress Foreign Policy based on the concept of peace and human welfare is deeply rooted in Indian Culture.

(3) This Policy of viewing India's problems in the world context in its formulation had the clear impact of Pandit Nehru's natural liberal outlook.

(4) This Policy though idealistic had also been guided by the basic idea of promoting the prosperity of its people.

(5) The Policy has not been static but dynamic which adjusted according to the needs of the time without compromising on fundamentals.

(6) The Foreign Policy of the country has been adopted with full concurrence of the Congressmen.

(7) The Foreign Policy has been instrumental in avoiding human conflicts in many cases.

(8) The Policy of non-alignment has won respect and a forceful non-alignment nations voice has come to be respected in the world.

(9) India and other non-aligned nations with their voice based on their unprejudiced understanding of the world situation at any time have at times helped in bringing understanding between power-blocs.

(10) India may seem to lose some small advantages at times, but has not only gained in international stature by our policy but has also been a gainer in economic terms.

(11) The Policy has advanced World Peace which is to the ultimate advantage of human race which includes Indian

> citizens also. The enduring Peace can be based on just principles as enunciated by Shrimati Indira Gandhi in her letter to this Seminar, "That the people of any part of the world should be free to determine their future, that there should be no intervention by outside powers, that established boundaries should be respected, and that place should be ruled out as a means of settling disputes".

I am very happy to be present at this All India Congress of Peace and Solidarity. In the course of years the Peace and Solidarity movements have carved out a significant place for themselves in the Nation's political life. We in India can never forget the great role of the World Peace Council during the struggle for Independence of the people of Bangladesh. The World Peace Council was the first international organisation to see the Justice of the cause of the people of Bangladesh and to realise the complete fairness and justice in the support extended by India to Banglabandhu Sheikh Mujbur Rehman, his party and the people of Bangladesh. The persistent and just stand of the World Peace Movement went a long way to convince the Socialist countries and vast ranks of freedom and peace-loving people everywhere of the fact that the struggle of the people of Bangladesh was a war of national liberation. The world did not take long to realise that the interested propaganda by the Chinese leaders and the leaders of the U. S. A. about India acting as an aggressor in Bangladesh was false and calumnious.

Indeed, we in India can take a justifiable pride in the role we as a people played in the liberation of Bangladesh under the peerless leadership of our great Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi. Only a few days ago while passing through Delhi, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rehman in a voice visibly choked with emotion spoke of shedding of blood by our Indian Jawans along with freedom-fighters of Bangladesh. Turning to Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, he said,: "You promised to withdraw the Indian Army fro bangladesh by March 25. But you withdrew the Indian Army from Bangladesh in fact by March 15". As a result, today, when interested parties and nations are actively engaged in creating misunderstanding between India and Bangladesh, our two peoples stand united in solid friendship and understanding and are becoming shining examples for friendly relations between two neighbouring nations.

However, I would submit that I do not see anything unusual or extraordinary in the art we have played in Bangladesh. This in fact is the natural course for us in view of our great national heritage and the noble ideals bequeathed to the nation by our towering leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

All pervading humanism has been the outstanding feature of our ancient scriptures. From ancient days to modern times, we have the well-known Sanskrit saying "Vasudhev Kutumbakam", i. e., the whole human race is one family. From ancient times, Indian kings followed the policy of peaceful co-existence in relation to foreign countries. As historians have observed the Indians did not at all undertake military conquest and annexation. The Indian kingdoms formed outside India without any political dependence. Our approach in international affairs has always been based on the high principles of humanitarianism.

The Indian National Congress even during our struggle for independence pledged India's support to people fighting against foreign domination. In successive sessions at Ahemdabad (1921), Gaya (1922) and Delhi Special Session (1923) the Congress pledged India's support to the Turkish people and in Delhi Special Session of 1923 congratulated Kamal Pasha on his victorious leadership and hailed it as a "sure presage...of the freedom of all the nations of the East."

Our Indian National Freedom Movement can claim the distinction of having established international links with progressive movements in other countries. Our leader Jawaharlal Nehru's participation in the World Congress of Oppressed Nationalities and the Large Against Imperialism at Brussels in 1927, as the official representative of the Indian National Congress was the beginning of the ideological linkup of the freedom movement of India with the anti-imperialists and socialists of the world.

In Brussels, Pandit Nehru told the Press:

> "We realise that there is much in common in the struggle which various subject and semi-subject and oppressed peoples are carrying on today. Their opponents are the same...The Indian National Congress is necessarily national and has nationalism as its basis, but as our great leader Mahatma Gandhi has said. our nationalism is

> based on the most intense internationalism." In the Congress itself, he said: "I would like you to understand that the Indian problem is not only a national problem, but it directly affects a great number of other countries and it is of world interest, because it directly applies to the greatest and the most influential imperialism of our time."

In the Calcutta Session held in the following year 1928, the Congress declared: "that the struggle of the Indian people for freedom is a path of the general world struggle against imperialism." The Congress congratulated the people of China "on their having attained their full and complete freedom" and for "their having ended the era of foreign domination." Similarly, the Congress sent warmest greetings to the people of Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq and assured them of full sympathy in their struggle for emancipation from the grip of Western imperialism." The Congress Session also decided to send a representative to the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism. The Congress reiterate the view that "the people of India have no quarrel with neighbouring States or the other nations of the world and they will not permit themselves to be exploited by England to further her imperialist aims."

In Wardha the Working Committee in 1936 sent "its greetings and its full sympathy to the Arabs of Palestine in their struggle for independence against British imperialism." In the same year in Lucknow Session the Congress while expressing sympathy for the Ethiopian people in their heroic fight "against imperialist aggression" considered "Abyssinia's fight as part of the fight of all exploited nations for freedom". The Congress while sending greetings towards Peace Congress thought of the world peace as the one, 'based on national and social freedom' and said "the Congress is convinced that such a peace can only be established on an endeavouring basis when the causes of war are removed and the domination and exploitation of nation by nation is ended. "Again at Fezpur in the same year the Congress said: "The Congress dishes to emphasise that imperialism itself is a continuing cause of war and its elimination is essential in the interests of world peace."

Again and again, not only through resolutions but also by concrete acts (like sending of medical missions and supplies), the Indian national sentiment demonstrated its fraternal solidarity with the other peoples fighting for freedom and social justice, e. g., in

Abyssinia, China, Spain, Czechoslovakia, etc. The wide sympathy for the coloured victims of racial massacres and oppression in South Africa at the time was in a chain of events and actions which have established the closest emotional and political contacts between the peoples of India and freedom and peace forces all over the world.

Of great significance is India's opposition to Nazism and Fascism. This opposition to Fascism stemmed from the deep-rooted radiations and democratic sentiment in our society. The entire Indian tradition, from the sages of yore has taught the people to condemn and actively fight against evil, exploitation and wickedness. Gandhiji condemned Hitler thus: "Hitler knows no God but brute force" (*Harijan*, 9.8.39).

Jawaharlal Nehru in his historic Presidential address at the Lucknow Session of the Congress in April, 1936 said: "Fascism and Imperialism stood out as the two faces of the now decaying capitalism" and "they represented the same forces of reaction and supported each other, and at the same time came into conflict with each other".

In August, 1939, the Working Committee defined the Congress stand "in this world crisis the sympathies of the Working Committee are entirely with the people who stand for democracy and freedom. The Congress has repeatedly condemned Fascist aggression in Europe. Africa and the far East of Asia as well as the betrayal of democracy by British Imperialism in Czechoslovakia and Spain."

After the Second World War broke out in September, 1939, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said in his Presidential Address to the Ramgarh Congress in March, 1940: "Fascism and Nizism are gaining strength day by day and India regarded this as the greatest danger to world progress and peace. India's head and heart were with those people who were standing up for democracy and freedom....India cannot endure the prospect of Nazism and Fascism."

In December, 1941, meeting in Bardolt, the Congress Working Committee expressed admiration for Russia "the Soviet Union has stood for certain human, cultural and social values which are of great importance to the growth and progress of humanity. The working Committee consider that it would be a tragedy if the

cataclysm of war involved the destruction of this endeavour and achievement."

The world vision of the Indian National Movement remained undimmed in the heroic years of 1942 and after, when Indian people were engaged in a 'do or die' struggle for their freedom against British rulers. Jawaharlal Nehru convened the Asian Relations Conference in March, 1947, which struck a historic blow in favour of the then struggling peoples of Indonesia. In 1954, Jawaharlal Nehru enunciated the five principles of peaceful co-existence, the Panchsheel. Some other international and regional conferences led to the historic Bandung conference of 1955, where India under Nehru's leadership played a leading role. In fact, Jawaharlal Nehru gave the world the doctrine of non-alignment which was affirmed at the Summit of non-aligned nations in Belgarde in 1961. India has been dedicated to the ideas of United Nations and the Charter. Under Nehru's leadership, India from the earliest years of its Independence became the champion of Asian ad African freedom which Nehru called the most significant phenomenon of the twentieth century. All freedom movements have received India's support. Historic has been India's stand by the side of Egypt when the tripartite aggression took place against Suez in 1956. The Indian National Congress reared up under the inspiring teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru carries forward their noble traditions. In its Election Manifesto of 1971, the Congress declared:

> "For the last 24 years, India has raised her once in the Councils of the world promote peace and fight the ramnants of colonialism and all concepts of racial inequality. The Congress pledges itself to remain faithful to the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru who gave inspiration and direction to our Foreign Policy which is in India's own national interest and helped to safeguard its sovereignty, security and independence. The Congress pledges to uphold the principles of non-alignment and freedom from military blocs."

In its election Manifesto of 1972, the Congress declared:

> "Our foreign policy reflects our commitment to democracy, secularism and socialism and follows Jawaharlal Nehru's concept of non-alignment....By continuing to adhere to these principles, we hope to help our region and the world at large in the maintenance of peace and the expansion of areas of international co-operation."

We further said in the 1972 Manifesto:

> "We are determined that India's strength and size shall never become a cause of apprehension to any of our neighbours. We are pledged not to interfere in the internal affairs of our neighbours in any way but to live with all countries in a spirit of co-existence, equality and mutual respect. We reject not only great power chauvinism but also the doctrines of spheres of influence and balance of power."

At the last A.I.C.C. meeting held at Dehli in June, 1972, the Congress in its resolution on 'International Situation' affirmed its policy: "Throughout its long history and more especially after attainment of independence by India, the Congress has consistently fought not only against imperialism in all its shapes and forms, but also has advocated that the pressing problems of the world can only be solved through peaceful co-existence of States with different social systems, co-operation between them on the basis of strict non-interference in the internal affairs of each State and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of every State." Such is our foreign policy of peace. The nation as a whole broadly accepts these policies though, no doubt, there are certain lobbies having foreign inspiration who condemn the Government as having gone to one camp. It is significant that these obbies want India to be aligned with the West and also the most reactionary spokesmen with regard to India's internal policies.

For example, these reactionary groups have strongly opposed India's support to the heretic people of Vietnam. The 1972 Congress Election Manifesto has said: "Our admiration for the heroic people of North Vietnam in their long struggle has been re-emphasised by our recent decision to established closer diplomatic ties between our two countries."

The most significant success of our policy of peace and freedom has been the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation with the Soviet Union. Our relations with the Soviet Union have thus been further strengthened and consolidated. Our policy of peace has also won us good friends in the socialist countries, Asain and African countries, Latin American and West European countries, such as, France, who stood by us and helped us in different way in the Bangladesh crisis.

We have no doubt gained much from our policy of peace. But it would be wrong to be complacent. We have to ever alert. The enmity and dislike with which the present rules of United States now view India and Bangladesh as revealed by the Anderson papers, the roaming about of the Seventh Fleet in Indian Ocean and the reported likely transfer of part of the Sixth Fleet from Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean cannot be considered as indicative of good intentions.

In order to guard our hard-won freedom. It is necessary not only to strengthen our national unity, and strength, it is equally necessary to unite with all other countries of the region who direly need peace for their development and also with all freedom loving and peace of the world.

We need peace to fight out our problems of hunger and under-development. In fact development in peace are in inextricably mixed. India, as well as developing countries are faced with most difficult problems in their past to raise the living standards of their people and rebuild their economy which has been ruined by heartless imperialist exploitation. In these efforts the developing countries faced the opposition of the affluent Western countries who resort to economic pressures and penetration, to tariff walls and such other devices as the European Common Market, to neocolonialist methods to strangle our development. The Western imperialists are not happy with the fact that the newly free countries do not like capitalism. Like we in India, many countries of the developing world have opted for socialistic path or rather the non-capitalist path.

These imperialist States are in every way trying to thwart the developing countries from following the path of their choice. Our Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, told the Lusaka Non-aligned Summit in September, 1970: "the big powers have never accepted the validity of non-alignment, Neither colnialism nor racialism have vanished. The old comes back in new guise...Powerful vested interests, domestic and foreign, are combining to create new structures of neocolonialism." And further: "neocolonialism has no sympathy with our efforts to achieve our self-reliance. It seeks to perpetuate our position of disadvantage. International markets are manipulating in such a way that primary producing counties have a

permanent handicap. The levers of technology are also operated against us through unequal collaboration and royalty agreements."

In the light of the above, I am very happy to know that the World Peace Council has set up a Development Commission to go deeply into the question of development and the menance of neocolonialism and I am sure that Indian Peace Mov ent will fully co-operate in this very desirable and important work of the World Peace Movement

I need not touch upon all the various problems threatening peace in the world. The Indo-Chinese people and especially the heroic Vietnamese people continue to be subjective to most heartless aggression. The Arab peoples are facing continued aggression by Israel. The people of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau are heroically fighting for their freedom from Portuguese colonialists. In all these places, we are pained to see the hand of U. S. Imperialism supporting the aggression and the oppressor. We solidly stand by the side of the people who fight for their freedom because freedom and peace are indivisible.

I wish all success to this Conference in its noble cause for peace. It will conclude with the words which our Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi said at the Lusaka Non-aligned Summit: "The unfinished revolution can reach fulfilment if we have faith and confidence in ourselves and the assurance that however long and arduous the journey ahead, we shall reach our destination.

## All India Congress Committee Meeting Gandhinagar

*October 9 and 10, 1972, Opening Remarks by Congress President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma*

We meet today after four months in a place sanctified by the Father of our Nation. A few miles from here is Sabarmati Ashram where Bapuji lived and worked and inspired our nation to great heights of suffering and sacrifice for the glory of our Motherland. Bapuji placed before us the ideal of *Poorna Swaraj* which means not only our political freedom from foreign rulers but also economic freedom to our toiling millions. Twentyfive years have elapsed since we won our independence but we cannot say that Mahatmaji's ideal of *Poorna Swaraj* has been established. People still suffer from want

and hunger. In fact, our 'Garibi Hatao' movement is a continuation of the great march on which Mahatma Gandhi launched us. The obstacles that may come in the way to achieve the dream of *Poorna Swaraj* of the Father of our Nation. Meeting here in Gujarat which has played a great and glorious part in our national freedom struggle and which has the proved privilege of being the birth place our immortal Bapu, we are bound to draw preparation for the achievement of the tasks set before us.

After the last meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Japan we had the Simla Summit meeting between our Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and President Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan. The Agreement reached at Shimla, was hailed by the peoples of Indian sub-continent as ushring in a new era of our history. It as hailed by world opinion as well and the world at large was once again convinced of the consistent peaceful policies of India.

In our Election Manifesto for 1971 mid-term elections, we had said "It will be our endeavour to normalise relations with Pakistan as we believe that our two peoples, who have so much in common desire to live as peaceful friendly neighbours". In our Election Manifesto of 1972 we again proclaimed, "we say to the people of Pakistan that India wishes to live in peace and amity with them. Peace and security can be achieved only through cooperation and not through confrontation. All the nations of our region have one supreme challenge, the eradication of poverty. Let us work together and conquer this common enemy. The people of India fully endorsed our approach and we reached Agreement at Simla in accordance with our mandate.

I must confess to a feling of great sorrow over the attitude being adopted by some big powers to obstruct growth of understanding between India and Pakistan which does not seem to suit their Global strategy. The use of veto by China to keep Bangladesh out of the United Nations can only be termed regrettable. It is really strange that China is adopting the very tactics which were responsible for denying it U.N. membership for more than 25 years. Perhaps China wants Pakistan rulers to revert back to the old policy of confrontation with India. Indo-Pak amity similarly

does not suit the nations manufacturing armaments for sale to other countries. Their business interests demand increase of tensions between nations and not growth of friendly relations. We want to repeat that we desire to have the friends relations with the people of Pakistan. To the rulers of Pakistan.

I want to make it clear that Simla Agreement is the shining proof of our sincere desire for peace as well as our confidence in our ability to deal with any attempt at creating mischief on our borders. Some of the recent pronouncements of Pakistan leaders and the recent trends in Pakistan's propaganda give rise to doubts in people's minds about the intentions of Pakistan present leadership. In this connection I will like to repeat what we said in our Election Manifesto of 1971: "We rely upon the patriotism of our people, their capacity for self-sacrifice, the strength of our economy and loyalty, devotion and strength of our defence forces which we shall continue to strengthen." The truth of this was amply demonstrated when Pakistan attacked us in December, 1970. However, my apparel to the people of India is that we must remain vigilant and not do anything which may encourage those who are not friendly disposed towards India.

To the people of Bangladesh we offer our friendship and co-operation. We have no doubt that Bangladesh born out of sacrifice and dedication to freedom has a glorious future. I hope Pakistan rulers will soon realise that the reality of Bangladesh cannot be ignored. Early recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan will not only clear the way for Tripartite Conference leading to the early release of Pakistan Prisoners of War but will also help in building of foundations for co-operation among the there nations of the Indian sub-continent.

We are continuing our endeavours to normalise relations with China on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. We hail the restoration of normal relations between China and Japan and we hope that it will contribute to peace and security in Asia.

The heroic people of Vietnam are still busy in their long struggle. We firmly believe that an indispensable pre-condition for the solution of the Vietnam problem is the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the region.

The tragedy in Middle East continues, Israel's refusal to comply with the Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1967, lies at the root of all trouble. India has been a traditional friend of Arab peoples. We stand for the restoration of Palestinians to their homeland and the vacation of all aggression by Israel.

In fact, as the pages of history unfold themselves, it becomes clear that all the newly-free countries of Asia and Africa, as also other progressive and peace-loving forces the world over have to come together and stand united to face and repel the inroads which are sought to be made by the imperialists into our newly-won freedom. Indeed, we in India can claim to be pioneers in the direction of the creation of united front of nations fighting for their freedom. The historic Asians Relations Conference convened by our late leader Jawaharlal Nehru was an important step in this direction.

At the Lusaka Summit of non-aligned nations on September 8-10, 1970, our Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi continued this tradition. She said: "The big powers who have never accepted the validity of non-alignment, domestic and foreign, are combining to erect new structures of neo-colonialism." Posing the question as to whether the newly free developing countries should wait in the hope that some day "a change of heart" would take place among the developed countries, Smt. Gandhi said, "we should not expect miracles of magnanimity."

Smt. Gandhi further said: "A realistic approach of our natural resources our capacities and our competence, reveals the possibility for us to work together to reduce our dependence upon those who do not respect our sovereignty. Neo-colonialism has no sympathy with our efforts to achieve our self-reliance. It seeks to perpetuate our position of disadvantage..International market are manipulated in such a way that primary producing countries have a permanent handicap."

These ringing words of Smt. Indira Gandhi drew the loudest applause at Lusaka and they lay the direction for us to follow. Today our struggle for a better life as also the struggle of other newly-free nations depend for their success on the international conditions. More concretely, it is related to the balance between the forces of imperialism and retrogression and the forces of freedom peace and progress. In order to tilt the balance in the favour of the forces and

peace, freedom and progress, the unity of all progressive anti-imperialist forces in all developing countries is the prime need. India has always stood for this approach. Our great leader Jawaharlal Nehru gave us this line. History has further confirmed Nehruji's great vision.

Within our country we have been passing through a period of great stress and strain. The droughts and the cyclones have created great economic difficulties. The nation is also faced with the after effects of feeding and taking care of ten million refugees from friendly Bangladesh as also of the war with pakistan. There has been a spurt in prices causing great hardship to the common people.

The Working Committee has suggested far-reaching steps to meet the situation. These suggestions will come up before you for consideration. We have suggested State take-over of wholesale trade in wheat and rice and completion of the programme by the next Rabi season at the latest. This would be in a line with the promise made in our Ten-point programme. We have given the call for a concerted attempt to root our profiteering, black marketing and hoarding and for this we invite popular support and co-operation. We also want to organise a distributive machinery for some essential commodities for common men with popular control so as to root out the mischief by middlemen.

We certainly do not deny the gravity of the situation which exists. This is really inherent in the situations through which we have passed. It could be expected of all those who claim to be patriotic to view the situation objectively and constructively contribute to a satisfactory solution of the grave problems. Instead of this, the unscrupulous elements have tried and are trying to make use of it to whip up violence, cause public disorder and destroy and burn public property.

Democracy allows peaceful demonstrations and protests. This is every citizen's right within a democracy. But it is clear enough that those who utilise popular feelings against the economic difficulties to incite violence are really not interested in democracy. Behind the violence on the streets one can easily see the hand of those entrenched interests who are being hurt by the policies being pursued by the Congress.

There are ways and ways of peaceful protests. Nobody can object to that. A particular party has recently protested but they avoided any violence. The violence which erupted on the streets of Delhi or Shahdara or Patna or elsewhere has been a deliberate attempt. The reactionary alliance of parties which rose up to challenge the Congress in 1970 and in 1971 and was convincingly humiliated by the Indian people has never reconciled itself to this humiliation. It has not bowed before the will of the people. Lying low, they have been planning to undo the results of the verdict of the electorate.

They began first by being great leftists. Those who voted against the abolition of privy purses and princely privileges suddenly began protesting, against the ex-gratia payme[illegible] to erstwhile princes. Those who always stood against land ref[illegible] [illegible]d abolition of vested interests in land began to attack the government for failing to impose ceiling upon land-holding. They earnestly engaged themselves in the exercise of creating doubts about the government's decision to put through land reforms and other far-reaching socio-economic policies. But when they were exposed, and when the government went ahead in its determined policies of land reforms and nationalisation of private, enterprises, such as coking coal mines, copper and steel mills, these reactionaries were flabbegasted and in blind fury took recourse to violence.

The Grand Alliance which is trying to reform and reassert is, indeed, a natural phenomenon. Nowhere in the world have vested interests given up their powers and privileges without a fight. What is interesting on the Indian scene is that domestic reaction is getting tied up with foreign reaction. Our Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, referred to the emergence of the unity of domestic and foreign reactions early as 1970, at Lusaka.

Let us be very clear. India is a great country and a very vital country in the world body-politic. What happens in our country is of decisive importance. It influences Asia and the world. The triumph of our anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and socialistic policies in this vast land upsets the global strategies of some powers who have come to assume today the role of the world gendarme. Vested interests, domestic and foreign are doing their hardest to deflect

/

India from the path it has chosen and on which it is marching determinedly under the leadership of our great Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi.

Vested interests when they fight for their interests become ferocious and unscrupulous. No means are low enough for them.

For us Congressmen, there is no question of our going back on our commitments. Our resolutions are clear enough. We stand committed to curb monopolies with a view to finally eliminating their capacity to do mischief in Indian economy.

We have also made it clear that there is to be no going back on our Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956. It is bequest to us from our great and glorious leader, Jawaharlal Nehru and it would be a foolish Congressmen who would seek to deflect the Congress from policies laid by Nehruji. Our resolutions make clear our commitment to the strategy of planning in order to peacefully evolve to a progressive modern socialist democratic society and finally fulfil our pledge to the toiling millions, the ledge handed down to us by Mahatma Gandhi.

Long ago, at the London Round Table Conference, in 1931 Mahatma Gandhi proclaimed to the world that the Congress "above all" represents the "dumb semi straved millions" of India. He also said that "every interest which is worthy of protection has to subserve the interests of these dumb millions". Mahatma Gandi further committed the Congress to the following: "If there is a genuine, real clash, I have no hesitation in saying, on behalf to the Congress, that the Congress will sacrifice every interest for the sake other interests of these dumb-millions."

Mahatma Gandhi's will is our creed. The Congress today under Shrimati Gandhi's leadership, seeks to be true to this bequest of the Father of our Nation. Nobody can deflect us from this part. We may err, we may make mistakes. But Mahatmaji's spirit always backons us that it is our life's ambition to be true to him and his teachings.

There is much talk of the Joint Sector. No decision has been taken on this score. There are no doubt enterprises owned by monopolists and they have been in many cases heavily financed by

public finance organisation. But these organisations have not yet begun exercising their right as shareholders in these enterprises. The question now is how much control, due to the financial involvement of public finance, should now be exercised over these enterprises. It is most essential to keep constant vigilance and be alert to the danger of public finance being utilised for private profits.

It is regretted that even some sections of the our public opinion apart from the reactionaries of the grand alliance have been making much noise about the Congress sliding back on its policies. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Our decision to take over wholesale trade, to create a public distributive machinery, to go ahead with the programme of land reforms, etc. are clear indications of our firm decision to implement the Ten-Point Programme.

We are also moving in accordance with our commitments in the field of foreign policy. The saga of the liberation of Bangladesh. the President's visit to some countries of East Africa, our Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation with the Soviet Union, our growing ties of co-operation with Iraq and the socialist democracies of East Europe are all examples of our determination to move along the line charted out in our Manifestos.

In the present crucial turn of our country a grave responsibility devolves upon Congressmen. The congress will soon go through its organisational elections. Because Carnages is in power, many erstwhile anti-Congress elements have entered the party. They hail from some reactionary parties. In the race to capture Congress units, there are reports of recourse to enrollment of bogus membership.

Our directives to Congress Committees are clear. We will not tolerate any enrollment of bogus members and the organisation will come down with a heavy hand upon those who indulge in these practices.

Our purpose is clear. We are determined to convert the Congress into fit medium and instrument for the fulfilment of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru's dreams. It has to be an organisation capable of mass mobilisation in support of the policies is and programmes we seek to follow under Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi's leadership. We have to ensure that such persons who do not believe in our accepted polities do not get into positions of

responsibility in the Organisation. Such elements must be kept out. Committed people—committed to the socialist objective, educated persons, intellectuals, younger men, and those from poorer sections must come up in the Organisation. The Congress must increasingly have a poor and working class base.

In the present situation, I would plead for an air of austerity. Let us always remember what Gandhiji said. He told us that socialism begins with the first convert. We must have a simple living. Swadeshi must be our watchword in accordance with our goal of self-reliance. We must give up personal use of foreign goods. These I regard as vital and intimately related to our task of "Garibi Hatao".

**Peace and Solidarity**

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this all India Conference of Peace and Solidarity. The Peace and Solidarity Conference movement has been active in this country for years and has made a very effective impact on the political life of our country.

We Indians, can never forge the important role played by the World Peace Council during the Bangladesh Liberation struggle. It was the first International forum to give moral support to the heroic freedom struggle of the people of Bangladesh. It justified India's impartial support to Bang Bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his party and the Bangladesh people. Because of this consistent justified stand taken by the World Peace Council it was possible to convince the Socialist countries and the other freedom and peace loving sections of the world that the struggle of the Bangladesh people was a struggle for their freedom. This stand also facilitated in convicing world opinion that the propaganda launched by the Chinese and American leaders against India was false, partisan and biased. The people of India can rightly take pride in our Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gnadhi for her unparallel historic role played in the freedom struggle of Bangladesh.

**Impregnable Friendship Between Indian and Bangladesh**

Only a few days ago, while passing through New Delhi, Bang Bandhu, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, paid very emotionally charged

tributes to Indian Jawans, who, as comrades-in-arms, shed their blood for the liberation of Bangladesh along with their Bangladesh Mukti Vahini comrades. Addressing the Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, he said, "You had promised to withdraw the Indian Army from Bangladesh by March 25". As a result of this, today, when several selfish elements and nations are trying their level best to create misunderstanding between India and Bangladesh, the people of both the beighbouring countries are setting unique example of friendship ad solidarity. I would humbly submit that the position that we took in regard to Bangladesh was nothing extraordinary. Our behaviour was in tune with the legacy of high moral values that we have inherited from our great leaders Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

**Humanity Our Religion**

Liberal humanism has been the bedrock of our ancient scriptures. The ancient Sanskrit tenet "Vishwa Bandhuttwa" has always inspired us. Right from the ancient period till modern times, we have consistently adhered to the concept of world brotherhood. Our ancient rulers have always tried to maintain friendly and peaceful co-existent relationship with foreign countries. They never were tried to conquer or annex any other country's land. The States established by Indian settlers outside the Indian mainland had friendly relationships with the ruling dynasties of India but they were never controlled from India. Their relationship was based on noble political morals, and understanding.

The Indian National Congress, even while waging its own struggle for freedom, tried to give moral support to the nations engaged in liberating themselves from foreign bondage. The Congress Sessions held at Ahmedabad (1921). Gaya (1922) and the Special Session at Delhi (1923) consistently extended its support to the people of Turkey in their fight for freedom. It complimented Kamal Pasha on his victorious leadership of the struggle and called Turkeys success as a good augury for freedom of eastern countries.

**Successful Foreign Policy**

It has been a specific feature of the Indian National Movement that it always kept close international relationship with the progressive forces of the world. Participation of our esteemed leader Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as a representative of the Indian National Congress in the World Congress of oppressed Nations and the Anti Imperialist League was the beginning of the ideological relationship of the Indian Liberation Movement with anti-imperialist and socialist nations. Pandit Nehru told the press at Brussels: "We feel that there is much in common between the struggle waged by certain subjects semi-subjugated and oppressed people of the world. Their opponents are also the same.

The Indian National Congress has always been a nationalist body. Though its base is in nationalism, Mahatma Gandhi used to over that our Nationalism was based on the noblest international principles. He told the Congress, "I would like to tell you people that the Indian problem was not purely a national problem; it directly influences the majority of the nations as it relates to the most powerful and influential imperialist power of the world."

**Anti-Imperialist Attitude**

After this, the Congress, in its 1928 Calcutta Session, declared that the struggle for freedom of the Indian people is the struggle of the world against imperialism. The Congress congratulated China for attaining complete freedom as it entirely ended foreign subjugation of the Chinese people.

Similarly, the Congress sent fraternal greetings to the peoples of Egypt. Palestine and Iraq and extended its full solidarity to the liberation struggle waged by different nations against Western Imperialism. The Congress decided to send its representatives to the Second Congress of the anti-Imperialist League. The Congress resorted its view at its session. "The Indian people had no ire against its neighbouring states and other nations of the world. It will never permit England to exploit its people for imperialist ends."

The Congress Committee meeting held at Wardha in 1936 expressed its solidarity with the struggle of the Arabs of Palestine

against British imperialism. The same year the Congress, at its Lucknow Session, supported the freedom struggle of the Ethiopian people (then Called the Abyssinians). The resolution stated that the struggle of Ethiopia is par of the struggle of exploited nations.

In its message of the World Peace Congress, the Congress stressed that real peace could be attained only when national and social freedom in its true sense was achieved, unless the root causes of war are eradicated, the real goal of peace, could never be reached. In its Faizpur Session (the first session in a rural area) the Congress again stated: "The Congress desires to emphasise that Imperialism was the sole cause of war. It was therefore necessary to wipe it out in the interest of world amity."

The Indian National Congress did not express its solidarity only on paper, but it took positive, concrete steps also in that direction. It expressed its solidarity by sending its physicians and despatching medical goods to Abyssinia, China, Spain, Czechoslavakia, who were fighting for their freedom. The heinous crimes committed by the racist power in South Africa which brutely massacring the original, non-white residents of that country, caused great resentment in the minds of the Indian people.

This drew them emotionally closer to that section of the world fraternity which was championing the cause of freedom and world peace.

### Nazism and Fascism Two Forms of Capitalism

India's opposition to Fascism and Nazism was of significant importance.

The deep rooted, intrinsic, democratic,values were the cause of resentment against these beliefs. Our Indian traditions are based on ancient, holy, teachings of sages and munts. They have taught us not only to spurn exploitation, injustice and evil ideas, but to fight against them. Criticising Hitler, Gandhiji had said: "Hitler does not understand God; he understands only brutal force."

At the historic Lucknow Session of the Congress. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the Fascism and Nazism are two different emerging decadent faces of capitalism. They represent the same

reactionary forces: while supporting each other, they also quarrel with each other." In August 1939, the Congress Working Committee, elucidating its policy, stated: "At this critical juncture of world crisis, our sympathies are with those peoples who are fighting for freedom and democracy." The Congress repeatedly condemned the fascist attack on Africa and East Asian Countries.

In September, 1939 the Second War broke out. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, in his Presidential Address at the Ramgarh Session, in March, 1940, said: "Fascism and Nizism are becoming stronger and stronger. They are detrimental to the forces of Progress and Peace of the world. India, mentally and emotionally, stands behind those who are championing the cause of democracy and freedom."

India will never tolerate the growth of Nazism and Fascism. At it meeting at Bardoli, on December 2, 1941, the Congress paid tributes to the Soviet Union.

It stated that the Soviet Union is championing certain human, cultural and social values, which are important for the progress and development of humanity. It would be a great tragedy if these efforts and achievements were destroyed.

**India's Successful Policies and Their Gains**

The year 1942 is a great landmark in our national history. The heroic struggle of 'Do or Die' launched by the Indian National Congress for freeing the country, which was successfully carried forward during later years, made the picture of our movement clear before the world. Pandit Nehru organised the Asian Relations Congress in New Delhi in March, 1947.

The Conference was a great moral booster to the freedom struggle of the Indonesian people.

In 1954, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru formulated five principles of peaceful co-existence; "Panchsheel." Some Regional and International Conferences were organised during this period. The most historic was the 1955 Bandung Conference in which India played a very important role under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who gave the world the immortal policy of Non-Alignment.

The Conference of Non-Alignment Nations in 1961 at Belgrade, provided support to these principles. India has always remained committed to ideals and declaration of the United Nations. After Independence, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became the leader of the African and Asian nations fighting for their own independence. Nehru termed this achievement as the most important event of the Twentieth Century. India gave full support to the freedom movements launched by the people of colonial countries. In 1956 the India's support for Egypt, when safeguard was attacked by three imperialist nations. The Indian National Congress dedicatedly followed the ideals and preaching of Mahatma Gandhi. These ideals were further carried forward by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In the Election Manifesto of 1971 the Congress stated:

"India, for the last twenty-four years, has consistently raised its voice, in world conferences, forward peace and has consistently raised its voice against all forms of colonialism and racism. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gave new Inspiration, shape and direction to our foreign policy.

The Congress is fully committed to the policy of Non-Alignment of not joining any military block. This policy has been welcomed by the world, especially by the newly freed nations.

**Our Consistent Foreign Policy**

The Congress, in its 1972 Policy Statement, declared: "Our foreign policy reflects our commitment to Democracy, Secularism and Socialism. It follows the principles of Non-Alignment enunciated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. By consistently following these principles, we hope to establish peace in our region and in the entire world. It will also help---expand the area of international co-operation. We, in our 1972 declaration, further stated: "The strength and size of India should never be cause of worry for any neighbouring country. We are committed in this regard. We will never interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. We are committed to peaceful co-existence, equality and mutual respect, among different nations. We not only repudiate the concept of domination of one nation by another but also repudiate the concept of area of influence and power balance.

In June 1972, at its meeting in Delhi, the All India.Congress Committee again confirmed its policy on the international situation. The Congress, during its long history, especially, after attainment of freedom, has been consistently fighting against imperialism and cold war. It has been given full support to the concept that the problems of the world could be solved by following the ideals of peaceful co-existence, honouring the integrity and sovereignty of nations. This has been our policy of peace.

Entire nation supports these policies. No doubt there are certain foreign-inspired lobbies, who criticise the Government. They accuse us that we have joined a particular group. The most significant fact of their criticism is that they want India to join the Western block. The elements who want such alignment of our country, are those who are vehemently opposed to our domestic policies. For instance, the reactionary elements vehemently criticise India for supporting the gallant struggle of the Vietnam people.

It was stated in the Congress Election Manifesto of 1972.

> "We have again praised the people of Vietnam for their long and heroic struggle. This was helped to foster closer relations between the two countries. The most important chapter of success of our policy of peace and Non-Alignment is our Treaty of Peace and Co-operation with the Soviet Union. This has further strengthened our relations with that country. Our policy of peace has been helpful in establishing good relations with Asian and African countries as also with Latin American and East European countries. These Socialist countries supported India at the time of the Bangladesh crisis and also helped in different ways. Our policy of peace has proved itself.

We have gained a great deal from our policy of Peace. But it will be wrong to be co-placent. We have to be ever vigilant.

The present Government of the United States do not approve good relations between India and Bangladesh.

**Unity Necessary**

To protect our had won freedom, it is essential that we remain united and strong. It is also very important that we maintain solidarity with nation who desire and need peace for their progress

and development and who wish to remain aligned with freedom and peace loving forces of the world.

**Dangerous New Colonialism**

We earnestly need peace to fight against hunger and to squarely face problems obstructing our development. India and other developing nations, have not been able to raise standards of living of their people because of cruel exploitation of imperialists. As a consequence they are facing difficulties in economic reconstruction. They are facing strong opposition from rich western countries, who are putting several fiscal restrictions and destructing the economic progress of developing countries.

Imperialist powers have not yet reconciled with the newly independent counties for their not totally following the capitalist path. Like India, many nations have chosen the socialist and the non-capitalist path of progress. The imperialist countries are adopting all methods of restrain them from choosing their own method of development. Our Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, at Lusaka Non-Aligned Conference in September 1970. stated:

> "Big powers have never agreed to our approach on Non-Alignment, its usefulness and gains for us. Neither imperialism nor racial discrimination has been wiped out from their world. The domestic and foreign elements are coming together to erect a new frame wok of neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism has no sympathies for our efforts of self-reliance. It wants us to remain in an economically disadvantageous position. International markets are manipulated in a manner that the countries producing primary gods should always remain at a disadvantage. Unequal arrangements and royalty agreements on technology are used against us.

In the context of the present situation, I am happy to know that the World Peace Council has appointed a development commission to study deeply the development problem of colonial countries and the designs of neo-colonialists. I am confident that the Indian Peace Council would give due co-operation to the World Peace Council in this regard. I do no want to mention other specific problems which are detrimental to World Peace. The people of Indo-China,

especially the brave Vietnamese people, are victims of cruel invasion. Arab nations are facing Israeli invasion. The peoples of Angola, Mozambiquee, Guinea Bissan—are fighting for their liberation against Portuguese colonialism. It greatly distresses us when we see U.S.A. supporting the colonial and oppressing countries. We solidly stand behind the colonial people fighting for their freedom. We consider freedom and peace indivisible. I wish all success to the efforts of the World Peace Council to attain the noble cause of Peace. I conclude my speech the words of our Prime Minister, Smt. India Gandhi, which she uttered at the Lusaka Non-Alignment Meet: 'Any unfinished revolution could be brought to a successful end provided we have faith and determination that we will reach the goal, at all costs."

*(Address by Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, President, Indian National Congress to the All India Conference of Peace and Solidarity held on September 20, 1972 at Calcutta)*

**Speech at Amsterdam**

May I begin by congratulating our hosts for this timely initiative to focus attention on the growing divergence between the North and the South and the prevailing stalemate in that Dialogue? I am also grateful for the warm and friendly hospitality we have received in this green and pleasant land.

Mr. Chairman, your country has a tradition of concern and caring for the less fortunate parts of the world. "Am I my brothers keeper?" is a question asked since the dawn of history. Its answer lies in the conscience of mankind. There are those who accept the responsibility voluntarily, others who just shirk it away. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that from this country which has a fine track record in development co-operation, should issue a clarion call—the" Appeal of Amsterdam" to the rest of the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think we are approaching a critical phase in North-South relations, and the prevailing stalemate is in my opinion, a time bomb ticking away whose blow-up will be more ominous than as yet visualised. The world economic scene appears increasingly more dangerous and dismal. To restore stability we must exert every effort to reduce both political and economic

tensions. W need peace and disarmament but this must be combined with much greater concentration on development and sincere efforts to revive a north-south dialogue.

The world economy crisis which originated in some of the major industrial nations has become truly global in character and scope, having devastating repercussions on the most vulnerable and the weak. It has led to enromous balance of payment deficits, mounting debt burdens and worsening terms of trade with falling commodity prices, which has brought many developing countries to the brink of disaster.

The present crisis has demonstrated the inadequacies and the inequities of the existing international economic order and its inability to cope with problems of development. The Non-Aligned nations, therefore, have sought a restructuring of this order through a process of global negotiations and readjustments which would enable all of us to co-exist and find our niche in the sun. This idea needs the support of enlightened and conscientious people as represented here. As you are aware, the "New Delhi Message" issued at the end of the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit in March, 1983 calls for immediate measures to begin the process of recovery and to stir the world economy back to the path of sustained growth process in developing countries will in the final analysis be as vital to the revival of the developed nations as any other growth-oriented measures on their own. As the present Chairperson of the Non-Aligned movement Shrimati Indira Gandhi said in U.N. "What better investment can the North make in its own future than by turning to-day's deprived of the South into tomorrow's consumers."

Ladies and gentlemen, it has to be realised that we live in an inter-dependent world. The economic fortunes of the rich and the poor nations are closely linked together and the glimmer of hope on the horizon—the slender sliver of economic recovery which is becoming visible in the North can be sustained over a period of years only if there is an improvement in the South also. Indeed one sure way to end the economic stagnation in developed countries is to harness their idle industrial capacity for development of the poor countries. Thereby mutually beneficial cycle of growth can be established. As the New Delhi Declaration says: "Economic revival

of the North is simply not possible without the survival of the South."

It is, therefore, a pity that some rich nations are turning their backs on these new challengers and withdrawing behind barriers of protectionism and catastrophic bilaterism. Short-sighted attempts to turn inwards and solve economic problems by concentrating on short-term. national interests is to fly in the face of historical experience and invite disaster. As it was wisely mentioned at Libson, a part of the problem of development boils down to a lack of sufficient political will to overcome the obstacles which stand in the way of effective development efforts by the industrialised world.

We need that political will. We need that multilateral approach. The economic crisis is global and must be tackled on that basis. It is essential that the developing countries whose economies are under the gravest stress, can should be given immediate relief. There is need for urgent measures to increase the flows of trade and assistance.

There must be improved access for the products of the developing countries to the markets of the Developed World, including the countries of Europe. There is need for improvement and stability in the revenue earnings from the commodities exported by the third world countries. At least there should be some equitable ratio between the prices paid for their raw materials and what they are expected to pay for finished goods.

There is need for greater participation of commodity producing third world countries in processing, marketing and distribuing of their commodities.

All tariff and other barriers against processed products of developing countries should be removed.

There is need for insulation against the catastrophic movement in prices which have played havoc with the economies of some of the developing countries.

As decided by Lisbon Conference there is an urgent need for increase in preferential treatment to developing countries in the matter of import from these countries.

There is an urgent need for enhancement of concessional flows of aid both bilateral and multilateral to developing countries and for serious consideration to find means to alleviate their debt problems.

Development in many cases has been arrested or even reversed because of the acute balance of payment problems and shortage of concessional finance. The alleviation of problems directly arising out of the debt burdens as a result of the current high rates of interest is one major area of crisis which needs immediate attention and remedy. Another is the necessity of enhancing industrial liquidity by augmentation of resources such as the SDRs. Also germane to this crisis, is the decision of the developed nations to persist in reducing the concessional sources of development finance. To suggest that multinational investment and commercial bank credit will fill the resulting vacuum is totally unrealistic if not ridiculous. We are all aware that both have been shrinking in the light of their own experiences in the third world.

Ladies and gentlemen, India is a developing country—a Non-Aligned country. We have made every effort to build bridges between the North and the South. If I may quote the New Delhi Declaration: "The Earth belongs to us all. Let us cherish it in peace and through brotherhood based on dignity and equality of man."

Growth and development can be real only when borne out of our common humanity. It is for human survival that we make this Appeal. Let us seek together the paths of prosperity; the safe roads of survival.

*(Speech by Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, M. P. at the Confederation of Socialist Parties in Europe May 18-19, 1984 Amsterdam)*

**The Appeal of Amsterdam**

**Our of Crisis, Out of Poverty: A Global Challenge for Europe**

The world is faced with a *political* crisis in which the North has responsibilities which it has not fully faced. Societies are being pushed to the limits of their endurance and beyond.

Despite signs of recovery in a few countries, the world today is till gripped in a slump syndrome, Interdependence is unequal, one-sided and increasingly unworkable.

The arms-race—both conventional and nuclear—is rampant and virtually un-controlled. So-called recession has developed into major economic and social crisis. Contracting trade and spiralling debt are a disaster for developing countries. Welfare-programmes in the North are under attack; egalitarian and basic needs programmes in the South are in crisis. Societies are on the verge of collapse.

The present economic crisis is structural; it is more than a temporary, if severe, recession. It has origins in basic structural deficiencies of the system of international economic relations. This system has been unable to cope with major international change due to the technological revolution, the role of transnational companies, and increased militarisation—aggravated by rapid population growth, drought and natural disasters.

The present crisis is more profound and more complicated than the crisis of the 1930s, because it is truly a world crists. In the present day world there is more inequality, and more absolute poverty in terms of food, employment and human welfare than ever.

East-West confrontation dominaes North-South relations. Mutual benefits are ruined by mutual rivalries. An annual expenditure of some $ 1,000 billion in military spending diverts resources from both recovery and development. Investment in arms competes with investment in social and human resources. The arms race and development are based on diametrically opposite notions of global security and survival. Security is not a matter of military defense alone. It also means social and economic security, the right to shelter, health education,jobs and welfare, as well as the right of nations to choose their own development model.

Regional conflicts are fuelled in the framework of East-West ideological confrontation. Meanwhile the fundamental issue of North-South relations is dead locked. East-West confrontation distracts political energy and creativity from North-South problems. Who still talks about Cancun?

Destabilisation, social unrest and outside aggression—rather than development—dominate the Third World agenda.

Clearly the United Nations are not playing the role they should. Since outstanding issues are not dealt within this forum, they either stay unresolved or are resolved in favour of the already

privileged. To use the UN to solve global problems constitutes a major political challenge. He ready is that economic crisis is paralleled by a crisis in political decision-making and political institutions both nationally and internationally. That political crisis is reflects in priority for the short-term in decision-making, as well as an exclusive inward-looking orientation of policy makers.

Further, development policies are hampered by the fact that the political forces working are much stronger and better organised than they used to be. This distorts national and international priorities, reduces the capacities for concerted international action and erodes the general commitment to closer international co-operation. This calls for a political mobilisation of like-minded and progressive forces in both North and South as precondition of resolving the crisis.

The concentration of economic, technological and military power reduces the political space for real negotiations, substitutes dialogue by monologue and reverses the process of the democratization of international society. While there are these underlying causes, a major and dominant factor in the current crisis is deflation through cuts in spending and demand. The essence of beggar-my-neighbour deflation is simple. One country's imports are other countries' exports. This means that import restraints not only impede investment, growth and development, but also tend to reduce other countries exports. The result is a vicious circle with cumulative effects, pushing the deflating countries deeper into the slump syndrome.

Security, independence of development co-operation are being increasingly threatened by conditionality in adjustment programmes, imposed upon developing countries by the IMF and Northern creditors.

**As Put by the Brandt Commission**

"While the international system has become much more complicated, with more independent nations, more institutions and more centres of influence, it has also become much more interdependent. More and more local problems can only be solved through international solutions—including the environment, energy,

and the co-ordination of economic activity, money and trade. Above all the achievement of economic growth in one country depends increasingly on the performance of the others. The South cannot grow adequately without the North. The North cannot prosper or improve its situation unless there is greater progress in the South. What is required is a fundamental restructuring of international economic and political relations."

The proposals for a New International Economical Order were first proposed and adopted ten years ago. The failure to implement them has been due both to the negative reaction by the North to these demands and also to the deepened crisis, which has put many developing countries, transnational companies and banks.

However, the N. I. E. O. proposals are more justified than ever, both because of the structural deficiencies built into the present system and because the economic crists requires fundamental changes in the policy norms, in the policies and in the institutions of this system. But is important to advance on the N. I. E. O.

In political terms it should be made quite clear that this essentially means a change in economic power relations. This is difficult to accomplish because a process of change has to start on the basis of the existing power relations.

An outstanding political effort is required to accomplish longer-run objectives in accordance with human and social values, which were agreed upon in the past but which today have become empty slogans for a large part of the world's population.

It is increasingly urgent to reverse the negative trends of international relations through the launching of global negotiations as defined by the U.N. These negoitations would offer integrated and chorent responses to the fundamental problems of the world economy in the fields of trade, raw materials, development, energy, money and finance. The two-phase approach emanation from the New Delhi Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Buenos Aires ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 represents a flexible and pragmatic approach. It facilitates the process of negotiations first dealing with the most urgent problems and considering structural and institutional changes in a second round. The decision of launching global negotiations has to be taken during the 38th

session of the General Assembly, according to the results of the exploratory process which recently took place in New York.

We are dealing with systems established four decades ago. In the meantime fundamental changes have taken place. Many of the rules and principles agreed on in the past are still valid, but not being applied. To return to them would be a step forward, but not sufficient in itself. Many other rules and principles are no longer adequate in the light of present circumstances.

Will Europe, follow efforts to dismantle multilaterialism? The answer to this question is crucial for the future of the UN, for management of crises, and for the chances to address the global challenges.

Granted its role as the world's major trading area, Europe has a special interest it restructuring world economic relations and in promoting recovery and development. It is the responsibility of the European countries to set their own agenda with countries of the South on equal terms.

The Global Negotiations, a UN conference on Money and Finance and the reform of the United Nations Development System in the 1980's could be essential steps towards that goal. The United States and other countries should take part in such a North-South dialogue.

The forthcoming elections for the European Parliament provide an important opportunity to put global economic issues back on the European agenda. This should include the potential contribution of the Third World to the world economy. This agenda should not be limited to symptoms such as the debt crisis in the South and stagnating recovery in the North. It must address the fundamental causes.

There is a global deflationary gap. We can must spend our way out of slump. But such reflatory spending must be accompanied by world-wide restructuring and redistribution.

Recovery, redistribution and restructuring the required because otherwise we will end up with a dual global economy with labour surpluses all over the world more jobless workers, landless farmers and homeless people.

Our proposals are directed to averting world economic collapse and the associated chaos and human suffering and to create conditions leading to a balanced and sustained world economic recovery.

Only in such a way can we reverse the vicious circle of crisis and achieve a virtuous circle of democratic development. Coherence and inter-dependence has to be sought between short and long run policies, structural policies, and domestic and international economic policies, so that the prevailing mutual vulnerability among countries can be translated in efficient, effective and equitable economic policies.

We welcome the range of proposals put forward by the Brandt Commission "reports A Programme for survival" and "Common Crisis", the Palme Commission report "Common Security" as well as the proposals on recovery restructuring and redistribution in the "Out of Crisis" report and the manifesto of European socialist Parties.

Some of these, together with new proposals are listed below as recommendation for action:

**1. Disarmament and Development**

- Create the political conditions that will make arms control and disarmament on significantly lower levels of arms expenditure feasible;
- a moratorium in testing and deploying of new nuclear arms to enable a resumption of nuclear negotiations between the superpowers and new negotiations, involving all nuclear power;
- strengthening of the committee on disarmament of the U. N.;
- establish national funs from resources released by reduced arms expenditure for purposes of conversion and economic restructuring;
- establish an international fund from the resources released by reduced arms expenditures for purposes of international peace-keeping and international development.

**2. Money and Finance**

- massive general rescheduling of debts including debt cancelling for the poorest countries;
- intergovernmental co-operation to reduce and stabilize interest-rates;
- annual creation of SDR's, up to total of SDR 150 billion to be achieved within 5 years:
- fundamental reform of the IMF-adjustment and conditionality policies;
- recognition by IMF of the value of the mixed economy to developing countries, the importance of viable public and social sector, as well as the need for reflection in individual countries if general global recovery is to be achieved:
- commitments by all donors who have not yet reached the 0.7 per cent ODA/GNP target to do so before 1990, and by donors who have obtained or surpassed this target to at least maintain their annual ODA disbursements in real terms;
- end the commercialisation of aid;
- to create a special IDA Supplementary Facility for the 7th Replenishment with an initial size of $ 3 billion;
- to provide adequate resources to IFAD for investments in the agricultural sector in developing countries.

**3. Trade and Commodities**

- reduce and ultimately do way with the trade and tariff barriers against goods produced in the developing countries;
- ratification by all countries that did not do so of the Common Fund;
- speedy implementation of the Integrated Programme for Commodities, including the Common Fund to stabilize prices of commodities exported by developing countries

and to support these countries in the processing of commodities;

- support for developing countries in their efforts to develop alternative applications of commodities, threatened substitutes due to technological development.

**4. Transnational Corporations**

- develop codes of conduct on TNC's through multilateral institutions;
- negotiate agreements between European and developing countries to the on the operations of European TNC's covering their operations in the Third World countries;
- more effective corporate taxation consistent with the national priorities and plans of these countries;
- support for labour and consumer unions organising countervailing power;
- support for governments of developing countries choosing alternative development policies, for instance in the food and pharmaceutical sectors.

**5. Food, Agriculture and Energy**

- support for developing countries to give priority to food production to increase self-sufficiency and strengthen food security;
- implement international policy measures that will not force developing countries to redeploy land, labour and capital away from food production in order to earn foreign exchange;
- an energy agency should be established to help developing countries produce more of their own energy and to reduce instability in world energy and to reduce increase energy self-reliance in developing countries;
- promote new an renewable resource of energy;
- promote a dialogue between the oil producing and oil consuming countries to consider mutually beneficial

arrangements including safeguarding supplies to the poorest countries.

**6. European Issues**

- ensure that negotiations on the renewal of the Lome-Convention take into account the necessity of increased aid and enlargement of STABEX and SYSMIN systems;
- improvement of the system of generalized preferences
- increase aid to the so-called' non-associated countries;
- take due account of the interest of the Southern Mediterranean countries including possible access by Spain and Portugal to the Community
- progress in reforming food aid in food strategy policies;
- reduce the dependence of the US-dollar by stronger European currency co-operation including a more autonomous interest rate policy.

Europe has to embark on a renewed special relationship with the countries of the Third World, opening a postcolonial era based on equity, mutual respect, and genuine independence. Europe has to play a more autonomous role in the world economy to strengthen its relations with the South and promote the capabilities of the developing countries. This appeal reflects the common view of all participants in their personal capacity. The signatories are not equally responsible for each recommendation in the appeal.

Bob, Cohen
Eveline Herfkens
Stuart Holland
Kighoma Malima
Porfirio Munoz-Ledu
Jan Pronk
Shanker Dayal Sharma
Prof. Soed Jattmoke
Thorvald Stoltenberg
Maartenvan Traa
Layachi Yaker
Zeist/Amsterdam 1984, May 18. 19.

**The Problem of Modern Literature**

One need not necessarily be a pragmatist to hold that one of the main functions of literature is to guide humanity at the various crucial points in human history. Literature the "Great social organ" is also "a great social force". It plays an important role in moulding society at various periods of human history. But literature has often been made an instrument for supporting the status-quo in society. In such cases literature may be said to forget its main purpose and to hanker after popular applause.

The reading public is mostly comprised of the people who go to literature to get their familiar feelings confirmed. The mediocre writers find it easy to follow the line of least resistance. They attempt to portray this life on the safe, dead level which most people have got used to an which the inertia of custom persuades them is the right way of life for all decent and law-abiding citizens. Such writers generally get popularity very easily. Such people try to avoid looking at anything unpleasant. For them it is always:

*"God's in His heaven*

*All's right with the world."*

Great writers, however, show a tendency to question everything that most of the people take for granted. They make us see beyond the facile generalization of daily life. We expect literature to be always in advance of the time.

The purpose of all great literature is to change mankind and society. Art for art's sake is the cry of the artists who dare not face the hard realities of life. Literary experience also is a part of the greater experience of life. There can be no division between literature as art and literature as social experience. A writer is a part of society and not over and above it. Looking at literature functionally we come to the conclusion that literatures has its object the moulding of human nature and social structure. The same thing is expressed by Horace when he says the aim of literature is "to instruct and to delight", or by Eurpidies when he says that poetry should deal with the burning problems of the day or by Arnold when he says poetry is "criticism of life".

A book written with a purely detached point of view is a myth. Every person must believe in something, otherwise there would be no point in living at all. What a man writes is bound to be influenced by what be believes. It is not possible to draw a boundary line as to where detachment and objectivity end and "propaganda", in its more subtle and insidious form beings.

The tendency in some writers is to become abstracted and introspective, to fly to the past, the future, to fantasy—anywhere in fact rather than face "the story of social relations...what is going on everywhere." They seem to hold.

*'The present is a dungeon dark*

*Get our into the splendid past*

*Or did the splendid future hail."*

Many of the authors turn their eyes wistfully to the past in an effort to recapture the past gleams of dying feudal traditions. Many dream of the future Utopias. But the best are expected to face the present with all its inequalities, slums, diseases and a thousand other evils, which are the creation of the present social structure based on the exploitation of the poor by the rich, of the weak by the strong. In real work of art there is no divorce between the life of imagination and the life of action. Today the world needs artists who may not only raise masses from their long lethargic sleep, make them conscious of their great rights" and their high destiny", but who may also if the need so arises lead them in the direct struggle.

Literature has got to aim at freeing man from the constraints, tyrannies and shams which oppress him. These things find their ultimate justification not in abstract beliefs and hypothetical dogmas of meta-physics which are often brought forward to support them but in the social order that the full force of every genuinely creative free and honest spirit must be directed. The aim of culture is to liberate and not to enslave the mind of man. For an artist to acquiesce in tyranny and injustice is too betray all that is noblest and most valuable not only in himself, but in the tradition which he inherits.

There must be a direct approach to the social problems. To achieve this the authors will have to fight with the inertia and instinct for conservatism and acceptance within themselves. They

will have to fight against the habits and outworn convention of their environment:

> *"These are times*
>
> *When all must to the cruicfle—no thought*
>
> *Practice, or use, or custom sacrosant*
>
> *But shall be violable now."*

At the present time literature which is progressive deals with the misery and wretchedness of the poor and their struggle for better life. By its very nature it must be a literature of conflict and bitterness. No doubt it is to be accepted that there is no virtue in the wretchedness of the poor, but there is virtue in the struggle for the abolition of that wretchedness by the poor themselves. There is virtue in the awareness that there can be no freedom worth the name for any one so long as any section of the society remains oppressed by the other. Freedom bought at the expense of others is no freedom. The struggle for freedom involves struggle against society as at present constituted. At present the opportunities for culture and self-expression are the monopoly of a particular class, while the majority is forced to live at a level at which the needs of the volley assume a significance above all other needs.

"I could never understand the reason why one-tenth of our people should be cultured, and the other nine-tenth must serve as the material support of the minority, and themselves remain in ignorance", said Dostevsky in Russia many years ago, but the similar problem is there is India unsolved up to this day.

The writers have got to worry about the working class and the coolies who work in the plantations and mills on low wages and in the so unhealthy surroundings, while the mills declare fifty to eighty per cent dividends and thus the capitalists fill their coffers with the wealth produced out of the toil of these labourers. A very large percentage of the workers is a usual carrier of malaria germs. Tuberculosis germs find fit abode near these poor over-worked, undernourished workers. The diet of the worker is "unsatisfactory from many points of view" has been conceded by the Whitely Commission.

The big industrial centres of India are surrounded by streets upon streets of most un-healthy dark and dingy hovels, that seem rather the approach to hell than the outskirts of a city. These are the places where people have to spend their lives, where they are born, where they return tired after a day's work, where they rot without work, where they marry and bring children into the would and where finally they die without ever having lived, carrying unfulfilled with them "the desire for life and love and fame".

British Imperialism by its ruin of the Indian peasant, by smashing up village industry and by a taxation by which the Indian peasant is progressively uprooted from the land and forced to seek employment as a factory worker or as a plantation serf, has created a proletariat which constitutes the greatest danger to both British and Indian Capitalist interests. The whole vast sub-continent of India is speedily becoming stratified in a class system of landlords, industrialist and merchant bourgeoisie and proletariat. There is also a class by itself of the Indian Maharajas who live in vicious luxury the parallel of which cannot be found even in Arabian Nights. The Indian peasant not only pays for the up-keep of the British administration that has reduced him to beggary even the wretched pittance that he manages to bring from the soil is again cut short to maintain these good-for-nothing princes. They are the most faithful ally of the British Imperialism without whose protection they will have to reckon with the wild despair of their own subjects.

The Indian Proletariat and the Proletariat of all Imperialist countries is becoming conscious of the true nature of these rich people, who seem so secure in ease, removed from toil and hardship, and "for whom the factory chimneys spread their darkness across the lives of millions and working class men and women die, made old before their time."

It is the duty of writers, to express the creative needs of the race. They are not only to hope for the establishment of a reasonable society but actively to assist as writers towards bringing such a society into being, by moving human race to stride toward the achievement of such a society. Literature cannot have nobler

function than that of awakening man to a consciousness of his high and noble destiny as a social being. Thus we feel with the poet:

*We have no time to lose*

*and having no time*

*We must scramble for our chances*

*We are too poor to be late*

**Rabindra Nath Tagore**

*(Published in "Light and Learning," Lucknow University Journal, 1942)*

(Alike) on auspicious occasions, or in famine, or tribulation in the face of the enemy, in periods of honour or calamity, he who stands by you is a friend indeed.

Indo-Soviet experience of friendship has stood the test of time and is, if I may say so, a shining example of the above adage.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi had voiced this sentiment when she very aptly remarked: "What is the true measure of friendship? heeding the voice of a friend in distress or danger and sympathising with and helping him on such an occasion is the measure of friendship. You (USSR) have done this not once but many a time."

As close neighbours people of India and Russia have been moved to know about each other from very early times. In the medieval period Russians considered India a land of plenty, full of wealth and splendid buildings. A thirteenth century book in Russian is a entitled *The Story of India, the Rich.* There was regular flow of trade between the two countries in the medieval period. .Russian traders visited India frequently. One such traveller was Afansi Nikitin who came to India in the fifteenth century and has left an account of conditions in India as he found them.

In the seventeenth century, a number of Indian merchants, dealing in silk and precious stones, were in Astrakhan, in the Volga delta. During Napoleon's invasion these Astrakhan Indians contributed 20,000 roubles to the Russian War Fund. Similarly, in seventeenth century a number of Armenian merchant settled in Calcutta.

After Nikitin, we find sympathetic accounts of Indian conditions by two other Russian travellers F. S. Yefrenov and Gerasim Stepanovich Lebedev, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Lebedev who was a musician and a dramatist, stayed for eight years in Bengal. He learnt not only Sanskrit and Bengali, but also wrote plays in Bengali and staged them. He perceived a close affinity between the culture of Russia and India. In 1792, another Russian writer translated the Bhagvadgita into Russian. After this, one finds Russians taking interests in Indian literature not only in Sanskrit but also in Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati and Telugu. In 1851, a chair of oriental languages was established in Moscow University and in 1855 a chair of Sanskrit was established in St. Petersburg University.

Russian progressive circles took keen interest in the Indian War of Independence of 1857 and resented the perpetuation of foreign domination in India.

Russian scholars continued their interest in India. one of them Ivan A Pavlovich Minaev, Professor of Comparative Grammar at St. Petersburg University paid three visits to India during 1874 and 1886. Interestingly, he was present as an observer at the founding of the Indian National Congress in Bombay in 1885. He hailed the event as a significant attempt for "the development of the feeling of nationalism in India, for the unification of India."

After the Russian conquest of Central Asia, the British were ever suspicious of A Russian invasion of India. The British opposed expansion of Russian power in areas adjacent to India and often used the bogey as a pretext for British invasion of areas like Afghanistan. However, the people of India were not convinced about the existence of any Russian threat. On the other hand a feeling grew in India that the Russians may help India in throwing off the British colonial rule. The Indian National Congress refused to accept the Russian threat as real and consistently opposed excessive military expenditure by the British in pursuance of their "forward policy".

In 1905, Lokmanya Tilak approached the Russian Consulate and made enquiries whether it would be possible for Indians to attend Russian Military Schools for training so that they may command Indian patriotic forces against the British. Tilak, in his

speeches often admired the Russian people's rising against the Czar and advocated similar methods of rising by Indian masses.

Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi was impressed by Russian thinkers and writers. His correspondence with Leo Tolstoy is well-known. He was also an admirer of Maxim Gorky who advocated methods quite different from those of Leo Tolstoy. Bapu wrote about Gorky in 1905, "Without caring to make money, he writes with such vehemence and bitterness that the authorities keep a stern eye on him. He has also been in jail in the service of the people and considers imprisonment an honour. It is said that there is no other wrier in Europe who is as great a champion of people's rights as Maxim Gorky".

Mahatma Gandhi was impressed by the Russian strike in 1905. He said, "We too can resort to the Russian remedy against tyranny. The movement in Bengal for the use of Swadeshi goods in much like the Russian movement. Our shackles will brake this very day, if the people of India become united and patient, love their country and think of the well-being of their motherland disregarding their self-interest. The governess of India is possible only because there exist people who serve. We also can show the same strength that the Russian people have done."

Mahatama Gandhi declared. "If the Russia people succeed, the revolution in Russia will be regarded as the greatest victory, the greatest event of the present century."

Russian leaders evinced keen interest in India's struggle for independence. On the conviction of Tilak Lenin wrote, "But the popular India is beginning to stand up in defence of her writers and political leaders. The infamous sentence pronounced by the British jackals on the Indian democrat Tilak—he was sentenced to long term of exile a question in the British House of Commons the other day revealed that the Indian Jurors had declared for acquittal and that the verdict had passed by the vote of the British Jurors—this reprisal against the democrat by the lackeys of the money bags evoked street demonstrations and a strike in Bombay."

Similarly, Gorky wrote to Shyamji Krishna Varma, on October 20, 1912, asking him to write an article for the Russian Review, "That could give to the Russian democracy the knowledge of the

Indian movement for liberty and justice." He wrote, "we must let know one people to the other, that everybody who thirsts for justice, who desires to live in accordance with the intellect,should understand their unity, the unity of their aims, their spirit and would be united in one invincible strength which will conquer finally all the evil of the world."

Thus Lenin and other socialist revolutionaries recognised that the struggle of the Indian and other colonial peoples against their imperialist masters was a necessary part of the growth of socialism in the world. The great October Revolution of 1917 gave a new impetus to this and contributed towards an intensification of India's struggle against British Imperialism.

Mahatama Gandhi was convinced that the "Bolshevik ideal sanctified by the sacrifice of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain."

In November, 1927, Pandit Nehru with his father Pandit Motilal Nehru, attended the tenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution in Moscow. On his return, Jawharlal Nehru wrote, "Our work in India will be easier if Russia succeeds in the fight against poverty and illiteracy." In 1936, while presiding over Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress, Pandit Nehru said," If the future is full of hope it is largely because of Soviet Russia and what it has done. This new civilisation will spread to other lands and put an end to the wars and conflicts which capitalism feeds".

Rabindra Nath Tagore visited USSR in 1930. The poet was greatly impressed by "the complete disappearance of the vulgar conceit of wealth and by provision of equal opportunities for the entire people without any manner of discrimination." He said that without a visit to the Soviet Union "my life's pilgrimage would have remained incomplete". "In Russia at last", wrote Tagore from Moscow on the 20th September, 1930, "whichever way I look I am filled with wonder". Tagore's "Letters from Russia" were proscribed by the British. "Rabindranath Tagore was greatly impressed by the progress which Russia had made in the brief span of a decade. especially in removing illiteracy".

When Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, the Congress Working Committee in its meeting in Bardoli in December, 1941

expressed admiration for Russia. The resolution passed in the presence of Mahatma Gandhi said, "The Soviet Union has stood for certain human, cultural and social value which are of great importance to the growth and progress of humanity. The Working Committee considers that it would be a tragedy if the cataclysm of war involved the destruction for his endeavour and achievement."

Thus we see that Indian political leaders as well as other intellectuals continued to have great interest in developments in the Soviet Union. The Indian National Congress also keenly watched with admiration, developments in the Soviet Union.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his very first broadcast to the nation in September 1946, as the head of the interim Government of India, referred to the USSR as "that great nation of the modern world which also carries vast responsibility for shaping world events. They are our neighbours in Asia and inevitably we shall have to undertake many common tasks and have much to do with each other".

Diplomatic relations between India and the USSR were established forty years ago, on April 13, 1947 even before the formal declaration of India's Independence. While presenting her credentials at the Kremlin on June, 25, 1947 Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, India's first Ambassador to the USSR said, "India has a special link with the Soviet Union since both India and Russia have shown their capacity to blend and harmonise different races and civilisations."

Her successor Dr. S. Radhakrishnan met Stalin on March 5, 1952. Radhakrishnan said that in his discussions, Stalin "showed the friendliest interest in our progress, and I may say that never was there the slightest suggestion, implicit or explicit, that we should line up with the Soviet Union."

Nehru accompanied by Shrimati Indira Gandhi paid a 17-day visit to the USSR in June 1955. He visited a large number of places and addressed a number of meetings. They were received very warmly wherever they went. On June 22, 1955, Nehru addressed a mammoth meeting of about one lakh people in Moscow's Dynamo stadium. He said, "We did not come here as strangers, for many of us have followed with deep interest the great changes and developments that have taken place in his country. He said that

peace did not mean only abstention from war," but an active and positive approach to international relations leading first to the lessening of the present tension and the attempt to solve our problems by methods of negotiations and then a growing co-operation among nations. We should endeavour to remote all walls and barriers to the growth of our minds and hearts such as come in the way of international co-operation". The joint communique said that "each country following a system which is moulded by its own genius and traditions and environment, is should be no bar to such co-operation." It went on: "Indeed the essence of true co-existence in which both Prime Ministers have profound faith, is states that of different structures can exist side by side in peace and concord and for the common good."

The Soviet leaders during their visit to India in November, 1955, expressed their full support to India on Kashmir. The 20th Congress of the CPSU in February, 1956, emphasised the desire of the Soviet Union "to consolidate untiringly the bounds of friendship and co-operation with India." In 1961 the Soviet Union also hailed India's action in liberating Goa from Portuguese domination.

After this the exchange of visits by Soviet and Indian leaders have become a practice for deepening and broad-basing relations between the two countries.

After India's Independence, Indo-Soviet friendship has been growing and has proved a powerful element in stemming the tide of racialism, neocolonialism and neo-imperialism in the world. Both countries are committed to rid the world of racialism and all forms of colonial and imperialist exploitation. The Indian National Congress had formulated for basic principles of its foreign policy at the Calcutta Session in 1928. These four principles are: (1) Opposition to imperialism and colonial rule; (2) Active sympathy and support to people fighting for independence: (3) Opposition towards war and devotion to peace: and (4) Avoidance of foreign entanglements for India.

The friendship and co-operation between the two countries has grows steadily eversince India attained Independence. These relations are based on the granite bedrock of an identity of interests, mutual respects and a commonality of perceptions in the context of

world peace and progress and culminated in the historic Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971. Since then, particularly, the relations between the two countries have deepened and become more broad-based and have been enriched by the shared experience of friendship and co-operation between the peoples and the Governments of the two countries. Of course, it is true that we do not share identical views on each and every matter but this only reflects, I feel, the range and strength of our friendship.

With ever-increasing momentum we march ahead jointly against the vestiges of imperialism and racism. Jointly do we strive for a just international order and for Peace, Progress and Disarmament on this planet.

In the sphere of commercial and trade relations, particularly, there has been significant progress. The Joint Commission set up in 1972, immediately after the conclusion of the 1971 Treaty, has helped widen the scope of co-operation by extending it to several new fields. The Commission has been playing a pivotal role in boosting mutual co-operation and in enhancing India's capacity for self-reliance in key sectors like steel, coal, oil, power and heavy engineering. The protocol signed in 1985 during Shri Rajiv Gandhi's firs visit to USSR tries to explore further untapped areas of co-operation. Greater economic assistance from Soviet Union and increased exports of products of our own heavy engineering and small scale industry will promote further growth of the two economies.

Indo-Soviet friendship has thus become an invaluable element in the cause of world peace and in the present disturbed world situation there is a greater need for co-operation between the peoples and Governments of the two countries. The populations of the two great countries, over one thousand millions strong, together represent one fifth of the human population, and can exert and increasingly powerful oral influence on world consciousness.

Tomorrow is the 23rd Anniversary of the death of Pandit Jawaharlal Nahru, who in my view, is the greatest statesman of the 20th Century. It was Pandit Nehru who shaped India's relations with the Soviet Union not only in the first few years of the India's Independence but who, in fact, represented the evolution of thinking

in India in the pre-Independence period in regard of the Soviet Union held Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in special esteem. As mentioned by Shrimati Indira Gandhi in an article written in July, 1982, for the October issue of "Foreign Affairs", New York, "the exchange of visits with the leader of the Soviet Union was memorable in that it was the first time since the October Revolution that a non-Communist personality of Nehru's stature and the head of a non-Communist Government was welcomed officially by the Soviet Government: it was the first time, also, that Soviet leaders travelled in a country outside the Socialist bloc. The talks held in Moscow and Delhi resulted in a significant measure of understanding that had more than bilateral implications. They demonstrated that it was possible for two countries such as India and the Soviet Union to maintain good relations and to work together in a friendly spirit in spite of very different social systems and without either having to modify its policies or sacrifice its philosophy and traditions." To Pandit Nehru we owe an irredeemable debt of gratitude for the vision, sensitive understanding, wisdom and humanism with which he served India, shaped Indo-Soviet relations, and contributed to world peace.

In regard to Indo-Soviet relations, Shrimati Indira Gandhi's leadership has also been of profound importance. Like her grandfather and her father, she perceived fully, with perfect clarify, the true importance and value of Indo-Soviet relations in the context of Global peace and progress. She observed: "The Soviet Union shares the Indian view on the maintenance of peace and the elimination of recialism and colonialism. On these issues it has supported the Afro-Asian stand in the United Nations and elsewhere. When matters vitally concerning our national security and integrity, such as Goa, Kashmir and more lately Bangladesh, became subjects of international controversy, the Soviet assessment of the merits of the case coincided largely with our own. In strictly bilateral terms also, there has been a steady increase in the range and volume of our co-operation, economic, commercial and cultural—to our mutual advantage. Economic relations with the Soviet Union are easier for us since we repay them through the export of our commodities. This mode of payment makes the Soviet credits self-liquidating."

She added, "The Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation concluded last year grew logically form this expanding relationship. It affirms the determination of both countries or greater co-operation in various fields and to consult one another, if need be, on suitable measures to safeguard their peace and security. There is nothing in the Treaty to which any reasonable person or Government could take exception. It contains no secret clauses, nor it is aimed against any country. Yet there have been some misapprehensions that the Treaty dilutes India's non-alignment. It is strange that such criticism comes mostly from those who have vehemently denounced non-alignment all along. In the text of the Treaty itself there is explicit recognition and endorsement of India's Policy of non-alignment."

I have, so far, briefly reviewed some features of the relations between our two countries and of course there are several other areas on a people to people basis and also on government to government basis in which there has been significant and enduring co-operation between us. The scope for such co-operation in various fields is also expanding and its value in the context of world peace, progress and disarmament is increasingly being realised by countries all over the world. The extent, depth and meanings fullness of such a relationship is subject matter meriting very careful study by all of us. particularly in the present time.

I am therefore very happy that in the 6th National Convention of the Friends of Soviet Union, you would be applying your minds to the study, analysis, discussion and evaluation of different facets of this fascinating and important subject. In particular, it may be useful to look ahead into the perspective of the forthcoming 10 to 15 years and attempt the perception and assessment of the emerging contours of political and economic realities which the world would have to fact and would therefore have to be prepared for. And, in this context, a further evaluation of different aspects in the whole range of Indo-Soviet people to people and government to government relations may help clearly to identify areas in which further attention is required.

I therefore wish your deliberations every success. I am sure the results of your discussion will be significant.

May I again express my sincere thanks to the Friends of Soviet Union for inviting me on this occasion and giving me the opportunity of meeting all of you.

With these words, it gives me greatest pleasure to inaugurate the 6th National Convention of the Friends of Soviet Union, which I, hereby, declare open.

**Jai Hind!**

(Inaugural Address of Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Governor of Maharashtra, at the 6th National Convention of the Friends of Soviet Union at Bombay, held on 26th May, 1987).

# 2

# A Man of Letters

## BABA SAHEB AMBEDKAR

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a brilliant intellectual, powerful orator, prolific writer, jurist, and above all, a profoundly significant revolutionary who championed human rights and human dignity, as a true pathfinder towards a higher human civilization.

We are justifiably proud in claiming Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar as a son of India but history will recognise him, more accurately, as a universal man, whose life-work was directed towards the emancipation and liberation of the human spirit wherever human beings exist, not just of a particular people enclosed within specific territorial limits. His message is therefore of global relevance, vitally important at every spot and moment on earth wherever man inflicts injustice on man.

The installation of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's portrait in the Central Hall of Parliament, symbolizes the dominant position given by the Government and the people of India to human ideals in India's polity—as articulated, established and sanctified by him.

On this important occasion, we salute Babasaheb Ambedkar and reiterate our nation's commitment to the path shown by him.

May I take this opportunity also to congratulate the Government of India on the decision to confer the Bharat Ratna posthumously on Babasaheb Ambedkar—the decision has been appropriate, timely, and necessary.

---

From speech at the unveiling of the portrait of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in the Central Hall, Parliament House, on 12 April 1990.

Today, more than four decades after Independence, the sad and bitter truth is that though politically free and independent, our country is still very far from the human ideal of a just society. Even basic human dignities and rights are violated interminably. The reality is that, whereas we have lofty and noble constitutional law and statues giving legal status to inalienable and fundamental aspects of human existence, significant segments of our people suffer cruel indignities, oppression and ostracism day in and day out. The outlook and impact of casteism, which has enfeebled India for centuries, continues to exert a malignant influence on India's ethos. A land that has been the home of sublime, humanistic thought and intellectual tradition—the birthplace of the philosophy of *Sarva Dharma Samabhav* (of universal humanism and equal respect of all faiths) has, tragically, an atmosphere despoiled by outrageous prejudice and brutality. Perhaps the worst offenders are those who mistakenly claim to represent the 'Hindu way of life'. Being either ignorant, or unmindful, of the true values inspiring our religious heritage, they persist with a vicious and inhuman system. Why is the caste system perpetuated? The answer to this is in a feeling of insecurity which leads to a clannish huddling together in exclusive groups, giving its members a false sense of safety and strength. The fact is, however, that casteism accentuates and sharpens social tensions, building up extremely volatile and explosive pressures in society. Casteism provokes profound social anger. The time is not far and it would be well to recognise this: unless those, who profess Hinduism but practice casteism, change their outlook not just they themselves but the so called Hinduism bereft of the value of universal humanism, will itself be engulfed and swept away like an ancient but decayed tree by the violent force of torrential flood.

To the weakest in society, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is, naturally, a great emancipator, deliverer from suffering, a Boddhisata. But to the others also—it should be realized—he is a savior. Babasaheb Ambedkar, will be recognised as amongst the greatest reformers of Hinduism and Indian Society. The

---

From speech at a symposium on "Maulana Abul Kalam and National Integration" at Parliament House Annexure on 11 November 1988.

understanding of his guidance will save the pretentious section from an otherwise inevitable and ignoble fate. This would lead them to a life of humanity, of peace, and practical as well as spiritual fulfilment. Indeed, such a development would give worthwhile meaning to national reconstruction and make India a force for positive good in human development.

## MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Today we celebrate the birth centenary of an outstanding personality in our history—Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. As we all know, Maulana Azad was closely associated with the evolution of a secular ethos and establishment of parliamentary democracy in our country. Maulana Saheb was one of the most prodigious nation-builders among a truly great and unique band of highly talented national leaders. It is therefore most appropriate that the Lok Sabha under the auspieces of India Parliamentary Group has arranged a symposium on this auspicious occasion focussing on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's profound contribution towards national integration.

To appreciate Maulana Azad's work for national integration it is necessary first to understand the mind of the Maulana. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who knew Maulana Azad intimately over many years, had described it in his on exquisite way. Panditji had said that Maulana Azad was, "A man of luminous intelligence and mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to its core. I have used the word 'luminous', and I think, perhaps, that is the best world I can use about his mind." This evaluation of Maulana Azad's mind remains with posterity as from perhaps the foremost world thinker of the time. It is an appraisal which must be given the due weightage in any estimate of the true value of the ideas and thoughts that emanated from Maualana Azad and influenced the national environment.

As an individual, Maulana Azad was one of the finest products of Islamic culture. Educated in his childhood and youth according to the orthodox educational pattern by eminent scholars and divines in Urdu, Persian and Arabic, language and literature, Islamic theology, philosophy and metaphysics, Maulana Azad had completed the entire course of *Darse-Nizamiah* by the age of sixteen. To the best

of my knowledge this is an intellectual feat that still remains unsurpassed. So here was an extraordinary individual who combined in himself a supremely brilliant intellect and vast knowledge and wisdom from a very early age and who then turned his attention to major political issues concerning our country.

In the context of national integration it is noteworthy that Maulana Azad's standpoint was based on the solid foundation of spiritual, philosophical and religious knowledge and contemplation of the highest order. In religion, Maulana Azad found rational answers to many complex problems including the intensely complicated political issues which he had to deal with increasingly. Maulana Azad's rationalism rose from the power and inspirational quality of his religion—Islam. He had described those who do not use their God-given power of reasoning as "Munkarint-Haq" (Deniers of Truth). In Volume-II of the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, Maulana Azad Said: "It is God's immutable law that if you do not open your eyes, they will be covered, as it were, by a black curtain. If you do not use your ears, you will become like the deaf. If you refuse to think, the light of reason itself will become dim and obscure." This statement by Maulana Azad is particularly relevant for our purpose of understanding the quality of his rationalism so evident in his *Tarjman-ul-Quran*, a work which is perhaps the most outstanding contemporary interpretation of Islamic thought. Unlike most other theologians, Maulana Azad accumulated and developed his faith not by inherited belief but by subjecting every particle of any system of thought to intense examination, analysis and evaluation. One of the very moving and indicative passages in Tadhkira, is an account of his experience with agnosticism. He said, "From the very first day. I have refused to be content with what my family, my education and my society gave me. I have need been found by fetters of tradition in any direction and the thirst of truth has never deserted me. There is no conviction in my heart which the thorns of doubt have not pierced no faith in my soul which has not been subject to all the conspiracies of disbelief." Thus, whatever this highly sensitive, existentialist, philosopher came to believe, or accept, had, and has, a greater value.

It is not wounder that one such as Maulana Azad was the obvious choice for the position of *Imam-i-Hind*, or a leader of India,

not only in view of his profound, objective understanding of the teaching of Islam but his deep studies of the tenets of all other major religions.

It is important therefore, in the context of national integration and our national destiny, to remind ourselves of what Maulana Azad said in regard to religious intolerance. In has *Tarjuman*, Maulana Azad uses very first words in the Quran Sharif, Al Fathiha, to explain the rationally and spiritually appropriate position. Referring to the Al Fathiha, Maulana Azad asks: "What will be the mental attitude of a person who sincerely believes in the letter and spirit of such a prayer?" And he explains, "Such a person passionately chants the glory and praise of God—not a God claimed as their own by different races and nations and creeds, but the beneficent creator of the entire universe, whose mercy and compassion encompass the whole human race. Then he prays for God's grace to follow the right path, the only favour his tongue is prepared to ask. And what is this right, this straight path? Is it the path of some particular nation or race? Or some particular group? No, it is the common path which all the great religious leaders of mankind, all the truth loving and truth seeking men and women of the world have trodden, whatever the age or race to which they belonged. Likewise he prays to be shielded from the path of transgression or wrong. But there, too, there is no reference to any particular race or creatgory or nation but to the ways of all those who have fallen from grace and been led astray. Thus what he passionately desires is the universal good of all mankind. What then is the kind of mould in which the mind of such a person will be cast? He will worship the God of universal compassion and grace and will in no sense be a man fettered by prejudices of race or any other exclusive groupings. He will be a man endowed with spirit of universal humanism."

Maulana Azad emphasized in his writings a categorical imperative in the Quran Sharif, "There is no nation or part of the world but has had its Prophet, and that we must either accept them all or reject them all for they are messengers of the same God or Allah or Parameshwar." There is another significant passage from Maulana Azad's writing which I would like specially to quote here. He had said: "In the advancement of nations, there is no greater hindrance than narrow-mindeness. It is our duty to keep ourselves

free from this disease in this new era of Independence which has just begun. There is no other disease so dangerous for the healthy growth of national life. It makes its appearance in every field of thought and action. Like an actor it masquerades in disguise. In the domain of religion it appears in the form of blind faith, and wants to deceive the name of narrower concepts. It behaves us not to be taken in by these fictitious names."

These perceptions, of universal humannism, which form the tissue of secular thought, are well-accepted now-except by a minuscule and ignorant section of our people. This is indicative of the advancement that has taken place, over the last forty years, in the process of national integration. Gradually, but on a vast scale, our people have been imbued with and reminded of the true meaning of concept contain and in their religious and spiritual thought. All this has made our nation stronger-our national ethos more vital and strength-giving. But if we cast our minds back to the decades which preceded Independence, and Partition, many of us here would remember, the atmosphere was a state one. It has been steadily poisoned by deliberate imperial policy, implemented with diabolical finesse till neighbour had been turned against neighbour, brother against brother, and an ethos of humanism, thousands of years old, had been over turned by frenzied communalism.

In such a context, the Maulana's thoughts and words shone forth bringing men to their senses and impelling a nation to recover its true identity. As Congress President, in his Presidental address at the fifty-third session of the Indian National Congress held at Ramgargh in March 1940, Maulana Azad had made statements which must be reckoned to be of permanent value in the context of national integration. "I am a Musalman", he had declared, "and I am proud of the fact, Islam's splendid traditions of thirteen hundred years are my inheritance...I am proud of being an India. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure is incomplete...Just as a Hindu can say with pride that he is an Indian and follows Hinduism, so also we can say with equal pride that we are Indians and follows Islam...Thousands of years of joint life has moulded us into a common nationality. The cast has now been

moulded and destiny has set her seal upon it...No fantasy or artificial scheming to separate and divide can break this unity." Maulana Azad was perfect Musalman and therefore a perfect nationalist. As a scholar, writer and thinker, as a party activist, parliamentarian and Minister, as a trusted friend of Jawaharlalji, as a guide par excellence of the Indian people, Maulana Saheb strove with exceptional courage of conviction for national integration. Would that he had been heeded more. The history of our times would then have been a source of greater pride of all of us.

There is so much about him that we should seriously reflect upon.

## II

1989 is a special year for the Azad Memorial Lecture. It is the 30th year since the first Azad Memorial Lecture was delivered by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1959. The nation is also celebrating the 100th anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's birth. This occasion is made the more memorable by the presence of Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali, I am touched that she acceded to my invitation. As he one who unfurled the flag on the 9th of August 1942 and as one personally acquainted with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, there could hardly be a more appropriate person than Arunaji to deliver the 1989 Azad Memorial Lecture.

Unquestionably, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was an exceptionally outstanding personality. An erudite scholar, a zealous social reformer, a pioneering journalist, he was also a brilliant orator who moved millions. His sagacity and vision were invaluable assets to the nation in our struggle for freedom and in the task of national reconstruction. In the words of the poet 'Mir':

> *Mat Sehi hamen jano, phirta hai falak barson*
>
> *Tab khakk ke pardey se Insaan nikaltey hain*
>
> (The heavens revolve for years to create such a human being from the veil of dust.)

Many images of Maulana Azad come to mind: of Azad the child prodigy who started his first journal at the age of fifteen and completed a rigorous course in religious education when only

sixteene years old: Azad as the youth who stirred up patriotic Muslims by his trail-blazing journal *Al-Hilal;* Azad the nationalist whose *Quol-e-Faisal,* a written statement to the Magistrate of the Calcutta scour in 1923, was described by Mahatma Gandhi as the most forceful, the most truthful and the most courageous statement ever offered by a Satygrahi: Azad, a 35, the youngest Congress President. In 1923, presiding over a special session of Congress, Maulana made the historic statement:

> "If an angel were to descend from the high heavens and proclaim from the height of the Qutab Minar, "Discard Hindu-Muslim Unity and within 24 hours *Swaraj* is yours", I will refuse the proffered *Swaraj,* but will not budge an inch from my stand. The refusal of *Swaraj* will affect only India, while the end of our unity will be the loss of the entire human world".

The subject of today's lecture has been well chosen by Arunaji, because it has three concepts which were close o Maulana Saheb's heart: Science, Socialism and Humanism. In order of priority his first concern was 'universal humanism.' The most profound expression of it occurs in his magnum opus *Tarjuman-ul-Quran.* At the conclusion of his commentary on *Sarat-ul-Fatiha,* there are thoughts that everyone cold benefit by. The subject is unity of all faiths: and he explains the first seven lines of the Holy Quran,which are quintessence of the entire book.

"Here is a person singing the praises of his God. But the lord he praises is not the lord of any particular race, community or religious group, but the lord of all the worlds, *Rabbul Alimin,* the source of sustenance and mercy, uniformly for al mankind. The path that he has in view is the straight path, which the founders of all religions and all truthful people have walked on, whatever age of country they belonged to."

It was natural that a powerful bond existed between Maulala Azad and Jawharlal Nehru. They were of one mind. Their attachment grew from shared ideals and a sensitive understanding of each other's mission.

---

From speech at the "Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Memorial Lecture 1989" on 3 October 1989.

Delivering the first Azad Memorial Lecture in 1959, Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking of Maulana Saheb aid, "Among these giants of the freedom movement, young in years, but always looked upon as a veteran and old in wisdom, was Maulana Azad. He occupied a special place in our movement and he represented to us, more than any one else, that synthesis of cultures for which India had always striven. He helped us to get out of the ruts of a narrow nationalism and enlarged our vision."

## JAMNALAL BAJAJ

Shri Jamnalal Bajaj was in every respect a worthy son of India. In 1942. Bapu's words about him. In the *Harijan,* where: "Never was a mortal blessed with a 'son' like him...There is hardly any activity of mine in which I did not receive his full-hearted co-opperation and in which it did not prove to be of the greatest value...He placed at my disposal his simple possessions. He became guardian of my time and health and he did it all for the public good". In many ways Bapu's observation is classic for its objective paternalism—more so as it had been articularted when his mind was agonized by the silent gloom of deep and unbridgeable sorrow. Such were the perceptions of the Mahatma: such was he personality of Jamnalal Bajaj.

We, all of us, I hope,·are well-acquainted with Shri Jamnalal Bajaj's life and message: his total devotion to the nationalist cause, his frequent and prolonged incarcertations, his labours for the attainment of basic rights and human dignity by the weaker sections, his initiatives towards growth of village industry, and his leadership of the movement for the use of khadi—which Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his *Autobiography,* called 'the livery of freedom'.

One may wonder about the motive force which energized him. Was it the powerful field of magnetism around Bapu which irresistibly pulled countless Indians to take positions in the serried ranks of a vast, ever-widening, nationalist pattern? Was it the early influence of Madan Malaviya or of that great revolutionary: Lokmanya Tilak? Was it an in-build sensitivity to his environment,

---

From speech at the 10th Jamnalal Bajaj Awards Presention Function, 11 November, 1987.

and a perception of the profound outrage of suffering colonial subjugation? Was it courage born of conviction about the responsibility of every true Indian to the motherland? Was it, therefore, the uncontainable power of a surcharged conscience that drove him on?

Be that it may, it is a fact that the Public mind of India—in those heady days of the freedom struggle—was fired by the idealism of innumerable minds—old and young—all deeply, personally, conscious of their duty to the Nation. Freedom from colonial bondage was the most direct goal, but with it were the objectives of securing an equitable social existence for the people of our country. The poverty of the poor, the hunger of the hungry, the humiliation of hose ostracized, the trauma of the brutalized weak—these were felt intensely, also by the thinking people of India—people sensitive and sensible enough to understand that the vulnerability and wretchedness of the poor and the weak were really the more obvious portions of their own vulnerability and wretchedness.

In the total appearance of the people of India they saw, mirrored, their own true image. They identified themselves with their fellowmen. And that is why they succeeded, where others before—them had failed in freeing our country from foreign irons—in advancing social reform and prospect for a humane and egalitarian society.

Friends, I am encouraged to recall this aspect of our nationalist history, by certain concerns: certain causes of worry, I need hardly have to specify them. They are in them mainstream of our thinking process. They engaged our attention day after dav, hour after hour. And yet, there is a tendency on the part of most of us—towards self-delusion. The travails and tragedies of another seem not to concern us. An attack on the life or the rights of another—or his loss—however extreme—seems to be somebody else's worry—easily tossed aside with the newspaper that reports it. Too many of us end to spaain around ourselves cocoons of self-delusion—living deliberately aloof, and detached, cosily comfortable in individual perceptions of security—lulled into smug complacency that keeping silent nd remaining uninvolved in social questions is the surest guarantee of personal safety. Too many thus remain unaware

of the danger that looms large over them and advancing unresisted, stamps them out—more mercilessly than others—whose plight they refused to see as their own. Thus do increase the proportions of social evils till huge numbers of families are affected. Remaining silent, not troubling to express on self on issues—which will inevitably affect one since thy affect society at large—is the great fault that so many, who should know better-commit. Tragically, we learn too late that early, united, resistance is the only prudent attitude.

There are invidious instances of social oppression that remain, unfortunately, ignored by the great mass of people. In Nathdwara,—not far from the birthplace of Shri Jamnalalji, who fought by personal example against all discrimination—Harijans were recently prevented from entering a religious shrine because they were Harijans! Does it behove us to remain in silent inaction when such a thing happens? Is it no concern of ours? Is it a matter outside our individual cocoons? Is it only for the Government to tackle? Let us think for ourselves and act appropriately—and not shy away from our duty as fellow-citizens.

I have mentioned these social issues deliberately. I want the people to consider them in their full Perspective. It would like the social worker of today's India to be alert and quick to arouse public opinion on the basis of responsible humanism. This is what the dwindling tribe of freedom-fighters would have done under the leadership of Bapu and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This is what intellectuals in our modern day generations can, and should, certainly do. The resolute confrontation and elimination of social evils must necessarily be a cardinal objective of all socially conscious citizens and workers.

Shri Jamnalal Bajaj was born on November 4, 1889, and his birth centenary would soon be observed. I hope the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation, which is doing such salutary work, would, as a part of the centenary celebration, make a special effort to accord recognition to those who have laboured with distinction for the uplift of Harijans and other deprived sections, in consonance with our ageless Indian world-values: upheld by our great nationalist leaders and social reformers.

## SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

Sarat Chandra Bose was not born in a working class family, nor was his upbringing—his education and mental training—of the kind that any member of the proletariat—a factory worker or a peasant—might have undergone in that period. He was cherished son in a well-to-do family and, with the advantage of the best university and legal training that could be obtained. Sarat Chandra, as a promising Barrister in 1914, could have looked forward to a comfortable, prosperous and happy future, public approbation, and an undisturbed, uneventful life—like that of many other privileged Bengali Bhadralok.

Sarat Chandra Bose, however, was made of different clay—the fine alluvium of Bengal, sacred earth of India. In him dwelt fierce pride, a tormented spirit, a passion—indeed an obsession—for the freedom, self-respect and social transformation of his people; and, equally, there was an enromous fire burning within him of emotion against imperialism.

We are all acquainted with his tension-filled life-story: the path that he took—being a Swarjist, Nationalist, and Forward Blocist—as a key member of the Indian National Congress, and then, as a Socialist Republican outside the Congress. About eight years of his previous life were spent in jail. Those of us political activists who have heard the gloomy sound of an ironbarred door clang on us would alone truly know what it is to lose personal, physical freedom for even a day. Sarat Chandra endured prison for almost eight full years.

There was good reason why the colonial power found it uncomfortable to have Bose at large. On April 10, 1931, he had appealed to the youth of India." To be inspired with a grim determination to achieve Swaraj, and to be prepared for self-immolation in the attempt to win it," along with many other reports about Bose's revolutionary activity, Sir Charles Taggart, then Inspector General of Police in the Bengal Government, in a letter of January 5, 1932, recommending Bose's detention, had said, "Sarat Bose has assisted the revolutionary movement for years by means of his Purse, his Press and his Prestige." Two Judges, after examining all the evidence, had recorded, "....his remaining at large was a

danger to the security of the British Dominions from internal commotion...although his activities were less spectacular than those of his younger brother Subhas, they were more subtly insidious and therefore perhaps no less dangerous'. If the imperiaists despaired of him, the Father of the Nation applauded him. Mahatma Gandhi has acknowledged his dependence on Sarat Chandra's support for the cause of freedom. In a letter dated November 28, 1937, Mahatmaji had written, "I am in constant correspondence with Sarat Bose...with the assistance of the two brothers. I could have done nothing in Bengal," Even after prolonged imprisonment. Sarat Chandra's position in the public estimate became cause for misgivings to the British. An Intelligence Bureau report dated March 27, 1944, timorously assessed, "Sarat Chandra Bose's return to Bengal at this juncture, even in custody, would undoubtedly create enthusiasm in those groups which know very well that when Subhas Bose went from the country he left his Indian interests in his brother's hand. They would look to Sarat Chandra for leadership, for guidance and advice and the circumstances resulting in his return would make it very nearly impossible for preventive action to stop the danger...If Sarat Bose contrived to get away and worked 'underground' in Bengal, he would be a very great danger the present circumstances." Of such potential was Sarat Chandra Bose—a powerful and firebrand fighter for freedom, that the arrogant and ruthless colonial authorities quailed at the thought of his returning to Bengal even in custody.

The struggle for freedom culminated with India's independence in 1947 but Bose was a disappointed and, indeed, an embittered man. His differences with other national leaders on important issues and on the strategy and tactics adopted are well-known. He was not prepared to compromise on any element of his ideal. He would break rather than every bend. Truly. India had in Bengal Tiger.

Today we celebrate the Birth Centenary of this stalwart in our history. We revere him for his adherence to our time-honoured values of secularism, individual freedom and socialism, his spirit of sacrifice and the suffering he underwent for the India of his dreams.

## MADAME BHIKHAJI CAMA

I pay my respectful homage to the memory of this valiant daughter of India whose glorious role in the struggle for freedom we recall with admiration and gratitude.

Something of the spirit of 1857 seems to have come with Bhikhaji Cama when she was born on September 24, 1861 in Bombay. A cherished member of a wealthy family. Bhikjaji nevertheless was not one to live a life of luxury. Her's was a restless soul destined for a bigger cause. The struggle for freedom was to engage her totally. This courageous lady had the idealism and determination to detach herself from secure and comfortable surroundings and to face the dangers and hardships of revolutionary activity against an empire at the zenith of its power.

Madame Cama's great contribution was in sensitizing world opinion against colonialism and in asserting India's for freedom from foreign domination. She spent long years in lonely exile fighting for the cause of India's independence.

Madame Cama is perhaps best known for having raised a tricolour flag at the Seventh International Congress in August 1907 at Stuttgart, Germany. Years later, Smt. Indira Gandhi said, "It is the tricolour she unfurled which was adopted with same alteration by our freedom movement." A flag is far more than a more piece of cloth. Bapu had said a flag 'represents an ideal'. It symbolizes the values and aspirations of a nation. Madame Cama's tricolour inspired countless revolutionaries during the days of the struggle. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had said: "We looked up to this flag not only with pride and enthusiasm but with a tingling in our veins...when we were sometimes down and out, the sight of this flag gave us courage to go on."

Indeed, Madame Cama had the rare gift of being able to inspire idealism and courage of conviction among thinking people. She did so by various ways: by the impact of her personalty and sacrifice, by her impassioned oratory and by her faith in India's

---

From speech at the unvelling of the portrait in the Central Hall, of Parliament House on 2 August 1989.

destiny. She had proclaimed. "My only hope in life is to see my country free and united," It was natural for her to extend solid support to Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai. In her fiery speeches, she sought to awaken in Indians a sense of national and individual self-respect. Her pride in India's heritage shone forth in her declaration. She said. "We do not want English institutions. We want back our own country. No English oak is wanted in India. We have our own noble banyan trees and beautiful lotus flowers. We do not want to imitate British civilization. No, Sir, we will have our own which is higher and nobler." Resistance to tyranny, she used to say, is obedience to God.

In 1907, the British Government decided to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the suppression of the first war of Indian Independence. Indian revolutionaries led by Madam Cama decided to counter the attempt to subdue nationalist feelings in India. This was the beginning of a major confrontation between Madame Cama and the British which reached its climax when Madame Cama issued an appeal in various foreign newspapers condemning the despotic action of the British government in deporting Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh from Lahore without trial. She expressed her revolutionary ideas in her newspapers *Bande Mataram and Talwar*. It was evident that Madame Cama's struggle was against imperialism the world over. She clearly appreciated the importance of India's freedom movement to removal of colonial domination in other parts of the globe.

While she was considered the 'Mother of the Indian Revolution' by her colleagues, the British described her as a 'notorious lady', a 'dangerous revolutionary, and as an 'anarchical revolutionary, anti-British and irreconciliable'.

Madame Cama wielded considerable influence in the socialist circles of Europe. This was apparent when she rallied the European Press to the defence of patriots. She came to be popularly known as 'the high priestess of Indian nationalism'. Her portrait appeared in French papers along with that of Joan of Arc. It was an eloquent expression of the fact that Madame Cama occupied a unique place in the nationalist and democratic circles of Europe.

It is appropriate that a portrait of this heroic, idealistic and devoted daughter of India should be unveiled in the Central Hall of Parliament. I am sure the life of Madame Cama and her devotion to the cause of freedom would inspire many patriotic mind in the years to come.

## Y.B. CHAVAN

It is a special pleasure for me to deliver the first Shri Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial Lecture on his 76th birth anniversary. I was associated with Yashwantraoji over many years and I count my association with him as a valuable experience. I shared deeply the national sense of loss at his demise at the end of 1984, soon after Indiraji's martyrdom. Yashwantraoji's life passed through many phases of light and shade, triumph and tribulation.

Indeed, he lived up to his name. The story of his life is one of success against heavy odds, of problems overcome and hurdles crossed, which only a shout heart, a keen intellect, at clear conscience and an integrated personality could have achieved.

The driving force of Yashwantraoji's success and his contribution to India, was his deep sense of patriotism. He put country above region, the people above any class or community. It was this patriotism and a fundamental faith in democracy that took him into and beyond various schools of thought such as the socialist group, the Satyashodhak movement, M. N. Roy's Radical Democratic Party, the Peasant and Workers Party and the Communists. His vision of India was that of a country that would be politically stable and economically strong with social equality and opportunity to all for growth. While being fully capable of maintaining its sovereignty, he foresaw India making a positive contribution to the establishment of a peaceful comity of nations.

Even in his early days at school he was a keen reader, interested in the world around him and was excited by stories of Indian heroes. The death of Jatindranath Das after a sixty-one-day fast made a deep impact upon him. He avidly read newspapers to follow the fortunes of Gandhiji and other leaders. By 1930, at the age of 17, he was involved in political work and was intent on playing his part in the freedom struggle which was gathering momentum.

Yashwantrao was arrested in January 1932 and interned in Yarawada prison where he met Shri S.M. Joshi. He was introduced by another jailmate to the writings of M. N. Roy, whose exploits in India and abroad fired his imagination and injected revolutionary ideas into his mind. A fire burned within him when he emerged from jail in 1933. He kept in touch with Roy's writings and finally met him in Karad when Roy visited the place in 1937 at the invitation of local Congressmen. After moving about with him for two or three days, Chavan had become a Royist as part of a small group working within the Congress party.

Behind this development was a form of frustration among young intellectuals in the Congress. They had different approaches and formed different groups inside the Congress. S. A. Dange, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, P. C. Joshi, S. S. Mirajkar and B. T. Ranadive led the communist group; while Jaya Prakash Narayan, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Deo, Achyutrao Patwardhan and S.M. Joshi were some of the prominent leaders of the socialist group. For some time Chavan was one of the important members of the Maharashtra Congress Socialist Party.

In course of time Chavan veered away from the programme of the Congress Socialist Party which he felt was not close enough to the people. Influenced by Roy's ideas, Chavan devoted attention to the social and economic content of Independence. He and his coworkers worried about basic questions concerning the well-being of the masses. None the less, they realised that at the time the first and paramount objective was the attainment of political freedom.

With World War II came a mental stock-taking, amounting to a crisis. Chavan felt it was time for the revolutionary movement in India to march ahead. He sat with friends through the night, debating over the future programme of action. While the prevailing feeling in the country identified Britain as India's foe. Roy wanted India to join hands with Britain to fight against fascism. Because he believed that ultimately the war was going to be between fascism and socialism. This was a rather sophisticated argument for the Indian masses and did not appeal to them; and therefore, Chavan decided that his place was not with Roy. They had a heart-to-heart talk and finally Chavan told Roy that they must agree to differ and to part company.

Chavan considered the future. He even called at the Communist Party office in Pune to enrol himself as a member but turned back. Already the main force of Congress philosophers had imbued his thinking and he returned to the parent organisation.

The Congress party adopted a resolution offering conditional support to the Allied war effort if the issue was democracy and a world order based on democracy. However, follow-up negotations with the Viceroy did not produce results, and the stage was set for another struggle. With the failure of the Cripps Mission in early 1942 the only option left was mass civil disobedience. Chavan was present at the AICC session which began in Bombay on August 7 and decided on Direct Action, calling upon Britain to Quit India forthwith.

On the night of August 9, 1942, Chavan was present at a meeting of Congress workers when the news of Gndhiji's arrest that morning reached him. Going instantly underground, he set abut the task of organising a powerful resistance movement in his home district of Satara. The Government put a price on his head. Police repression and intensified guerilla resistance followed each other in succession, leading subsequently to the 'Patri Sarkar' or 'Prati Sarkar' (Parallel Government).

The exploits of the 'Patri Sarkar' comprise a dramatic chapter. Yashwantrao Chavan was prominent among a small number of activists who organised the parallel government in Satara. At Chavan's call the entire student community in Karad stayed away from school and marched on the taluka office on August 11, 1942. They applied increasing pressure on the policy day by day, snatching away their rifles, derailing trains and cutting telegraph and telephone lines. Chavan added another dimension when, in the midst of all this underground activity and an alarmed police force intent on seizing him, he dared to rush to the bedside of his ailing wife Venutal whom he had wed only six months earlier. Someone betrayed him and he was arrested.

Much later, after the release of leaders and the termination of the movement, the Government decided to hold elections to the Central and provincial legislatures. Chavan was persuaded to stand for election to the Bombay Legislative assembly in March 1946.

And so began his career as a legislator. He was duly elected and became Parliamentary Secretary to Shri Morarji Desai, who was Minister for Home and Revenue in the then Bombay State. He utilised the position to gain valuable legislative experience.

Meanwhile the Peasants and Workers Party, reflecting the rural discontent over a new tenancy law introduced by the State Government, wanted Chavan to join the party. But Yashwantrao was committed to Pt. Nehru and flat that only the congress under Nehru was capable of achieving he desired socioe-conomic progress.

The general elections in 1952 brought setbacks to the Peasant and Workers Party and the Congress was again returned to power. Chavan found a place in Shri Morarji Desai's Cabinet as a full-fledged Minister for Local Self Government and Civil Supplies. By heeding the public dissatisfaction against high prices and mal-distribution of foodgrains and lifting control on the one hand and on movement of the other, Chavan earned the goodwill of the people.

Around this time the reorganisation of States in India on the basis of language was becoming a lively talking point and the question of carving separate linguistic States of Maharashtra and Gujarat out of Bombay State came up in a big way. There were divergent views prevalent at the time regarding the efficacy of linguistic States.

Here was a real test for Chavan—his patriotism, his sagacity, his loyalty to the party and the conflicting emotions that may have raged in his heart. He appreciated the desire of the overwhelming majority of Maharashtrians for the creation of Samyukta Maharashtra. But he placed the national interest above that of a State. He was apprehensive that Maharashtra might be segregated from the national mainstream. He was of the view that Maharashtra should come into being with the willingness and consent of the national leadership. If it was to be a choice between Samyukta Maharashtra and the Nation's interest, he would opt for the latter. Not that he loved Maharashtra less, but he loved India more.

In the light of these considerations Chavan proceeded to administer the Bombay State is the best interest of its people. However, it became increasingly clear that neither the

Maharashtrain nor the Gujarati population was in favour of the existing composition of the State; and much less the regions of Vidarbha and Marathwada, formerly parts respectively of Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad States, which had been merged in Bombay State with the professed objective of furthering their interests. They felt, on the contrary, that they were submerged in a new and large-sized State in which they were lost and their interest were not receiving enough attention.

Thus discontent grew in the State and this was reflected in the results of the general election 1957 when large numbers of Samyukta Maharashtra candidates were returned to the State Assembly. Chavan could not but gauge the mood of the masses and, democrat that he was, he could no longer put off conveying his assessment of the situation to Nehru. With Indiraji's decisive support, Chavan was able to take Nehru and the All India Congress Committee along with him, making possible the realisation of his own and the people's dream of a Samyukta Maharashtra. At last. thanks to his persistent efforts he had succeeded in bringing the Mangal Kalash' of Samyukta Maharashtra with the consent of the Congress leadership.

May 1, 1960, saw the birth of Maharashtra State and the installation of Chavan as its first Chief Minister. A 2000-year-old cultural concept had at last been transformed into an administrative entity. One of the first acts of Chavan was to declare that Maharashtra stood for secular, socialist value where Indians speaking different languages lived and worked together for the greater good and glory of Maharashtra State as a part of India. A strong Maharashtra meant a strong India as a strong India meant a strong Maharashtra.

Chavan had a vision of Maharashtra as he had a vision of India. He saw Maharashtra as a fully modern State that would adopt the latest techniques without throwing over board old and proven values. As a man of the masses his first thought was for the poor. "I opted for the office of Chief Minister", he said, "to serve the farmers and the toiling masses." Following Gandhi's thoughts, he sought to end exploitation of all kinds—political, economic and social.

While his thoughts were shaped by the writings of Marx. Bertrand Russell, M. N. Roy. Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, basically his living faith in socialism arose from the plight of millions of his countryman in the rural areas among whom he was born and bred. Chavan belonged to that band of gifted political leaders who foresaw the necessity of modernising the rural areas, and propagating the idea of establishing an agro-industrial society. This he proceeded to do by means of cooperative institutions, including sugar cooperatives and cooperative spinning mills. These would have the dual effect of preventing exploitation of the farmers on the one hand and of modernising the rural areas on the other. They would fulfil his cherished dream, as envisioned by Ruskin and endorsed by the Mahatma, of carrying welfare up to the last man.

In pursuance of his objective Chavan enlisted the know-how of experts as well as the earthy knowledge of the ordinary man. He got the renowned economist, Dr. D. R. Gadgil, to plan a chain of sugar cooperatives that would act as a catalyst for all-round advancement of the rural areas. More than a hundred of these co-operatives today help to get the sugarcane-grower remunerative prices, provided employment, trigger various ancillary industries, and improve the quality of life in their neighbourhood through general, technical, medical and professional education. They have become centres of growth around which the rural areas advance and prosper.

Since the days of the freedom movement, decentralisation administration has been a talking point along with economic decentralisation. Yet another contribution of Chavan is the establishment of zilla parishads, panchayat samitis and gram panchayats, as early as in 1962, which have developed as training grounds for rural leadership. Through these, the common man participated in the process of development. Especially the youth have participated actively in decision making at district and taluka levels, paving the way for an effective in decision making at district and taluka levels, paving the way for an effective second line of leadership in the State. Maharashtra leads both in the decentralisation of political and economic power which has led to a remarkable political and economic transformation, a pace-setter for the entire country. The creation of a second line of leadership at the

rural level has thus enabled Maharashtra and India to posses as inexhaustible reservoir of trained manpower available to take up the myriad tasks of development.

Chavan had very clear ideas about the *raison d'etre* of a unilingual State. To his mind, unilingual States were devised for the purpose of bringing the people and the administrators closer to each other so that there might be perfect understanding between the two. But even a common language alone is not enough to achieve such understanding. It is not merely a matte of speaking the same language. It extended to speaking the same language from the heart. And this could not happen without a change of hurt on the part of the administrators. Chavan, therefore, aimed at a restructuring of the system to induce the needed change of heart.

From the outset Chavan identified government as the prime instrument of the people's welfare and established in his mind an equation between the quality of administration Chavan gave due place to the professional civil servant and fostered merit wherever he found it. When the Koyna hydro-electric project was under consideration he visualised it on a grander scale than did the engineers, for the thought of the future beyond the immediate future and of providing for the generations of the morrow.

With his sense of social responsibility and uncanny knack of picking the right type of entrepreneurs, he was able to push the growth of industry. At one time Maharashtra's industry was symbolised more or less by the textile mills of Bombay. Now industry has spread from Bombay towards Pune, Thane and Nashik and has travelled beyond these beehives of activity to the hitherto backward areas of Marathwada, Vidarbha and Khandesh. Even tribal areas such as Chandrapur, Bhandara and Gadchiroli districts have been opened up. As for industries in the region of Bombay, as one drives along the Borghat on an evening, one is impressed by the shining array of electronic, engineering, chemical, pharmaceutical, defence and other industrial plants which look like a permanent display of Maharashtra's industrial power.

All this could not have been achieved without the emotional integration of people in the different areas of the State. Vidarbha, Marathawada and Konkan were all involved in the development

effort and now steps are under way to accelerate the development of comparatively backward regions to bring them on par with the advanced ones. But ruling the State with understanding, sagacity and farsightedness Chavan provided an object lesson in running a result-oriented public administration.

By thus carrying with him all sections of society as well as all categories of government personnel, Chavan well and truly laid the foundations of Maharathstra as a frontline State that as fast becoming the strong arm of India. Maharashtra State came into being in conditions of crisis created by the controversy over doubts expressed by certain sections on the capacity of the unilingual State to handle large and various problems touching multifarious communities which had gravitated to the State from all parts of India to make good. But with his sure and healing touch he defused the crisis, the first of a number of crisis which he was to be called upon to grapple with in his later career.

It was with a sense of pride that the people of Maharashtra saw Chavan being appointed India's Defence Minister. That touched a deep chord in the psyche of the people of Maharashtra with their tradition of valour and sacrifice for the country's security. However, equally, for the people of Maharashtra it was a great wrench, and for Chavan personally it was somewhat of a risk in having to step into a difficult Ministry at a difficult juncture. Both the subject and the place were going to be strange and new, and it needed a bold man to sake his hardearned reputation and assured career for what then seemed an unknown adventure. But, characeristically, Chavan took the only decision that a man of his patriotic spirit and temperament could have done. *He accepted the challenge and raced to Delhi to shoulder the new responsibility.* While Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru made an imaginative and wise decision in picking up Chavan, the latter responded fittingly by discarding all other thoughts of his own political future.

Yashwantrao knew that he must strive to bolster India's defence. He realised that his first duty was to rebuild the morale of the India armed forces. Again he set about applying the healing touch and reached out to all the Services and all the ranks, high and low alike, to restore their spirit, convicing them that here was a civilian who well appreciated their needs and would go all out to met

them. He took them into his confidence and restored their pride in themselves by giving their suggestions due respect and not claiming to know more about military matters than they did. He mad personal contacts with the troops stationed on the erstwhile warfronts, tried to understand their problems and to established rapport with the men and officers. He went to their training institutions, sat with them talked with them and ate with them. He came to grips with problems and potentials-first hand. Slowly but surely the earlier frustrations in the ranks of the army gave place to confidence, and they felt the presence of a man on whom they could rely to provide them their felt needs.

One of the other foremost task was to restore a proper chain of command. He came to know all the three Chiefs of Staff by meeting and conferring with them often-for nearly four years he held morning briefings everyday which were attended by the Chiefs of Staff, the Defence Secretary. These briefings came to be nick-named as 'morning prayers' which considered the supply position and problems of internal organisation and how to break the bottlenecks.

Within a relatively short time the army had been reorganised, mountain divisions had been raised and modern equipment and weapons issue to the troops. Chavan carried forward the programme of reorganizing and modernising the Air Force, and he also turned his attention to the Navy which, because of the country's preoccupation with the northern land border, had missed the notice it deserved.

It was this strong foundation for the defence services that Chavan built so arduously and determinedly that was to stand us in such good stead in later years.

When Chavan responded to Nehru's call and took up the defence portfolio in the winter of discontent of 1962, he had told the Prime Minister that he had no qualification for the job except his patriotism. But he settled down admirably to a stint of very valuable work that fortified India's defence. The Sahyadris had indeed rushed in support of his Himalayas. Well might the Indian nation have addressed him in the Biblical words: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant'.

It was again in a time of crisis in 1966 that Chavan was called upon to take over the Home portfolio. 1966 was an extremely difficult year for India, what with the religious revivalism, student unrest, fast and threats of self-immolation by religious heads. Chavan ably handled these problems from the viewpoint of the maintenance of law and order and the importance of upholding the secular character of the State.

An unusual problem was the police revolt in 1967 which had been brewing over the conditions of service. The policemen surrounded Chavan's house but he dealt with them with both firmness and tact and asked them to go back and report at their places of duty. Later he looked in to their demand and gave some immediate relief. A Commission went into the matter and the government met their genuine grievances and demands.

In mid-1970 Chavan was appointed Finance Minister, yet another challenging appointment, and again at a time when things were anything but rosy from the economic point of view. Unemployment both in the urban and rural areas was a matter for concern. Chavan regarded the former as explosive material because the urban employed had the capacity to organise themselves; and when they went to the rural areas with wrong ideas, it could be dangerous.

The five major economic areas which engaged his attention were: the holding of the prince in the removal of inequalities and imbalances, the extension of the public sector, increased efficiency and economic viability of public sector units and follow-up measures on bank nationalisation. He tried to activise the nationalised banks in extending banking facilities to larger sections of society over a wider area, and in reducing disparities. He hoped that a large number of unemployed persons would be able to set themselves up in gainful employment as a result of procedures liberalising the terms of credit to the self-employed. He believed that nationalisation of banks and abolition of privy purses were only symbolic of the direction in which the economy should move—greater benefits to larger numbers of people and total abolition of unearned incomes. The aim was to distribute the tax burden in such a way as to scale down the disparities in income and wealth.

Chavan's ideas reflected his background of socialism. To his mind the most urgent task before the Government was the mitigation of poverty and raising the standards of living of the poor, in order to translate the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' into a living fact.

With the subsequent allotment to his care of the External Affairs portfolio in which he proved in inestimable assistance to the Prime Minister, Chavan had the singular distinction of holding, with signal success, the four major portfolios of Defence, Home, Finance and External Affairs in the Government of India each at a critical time. Many decisions of national importance taken by the Congress party as well as the Government bore the imprint of his contribution.

The esteem and affection in which he was held by Chief Minister and others who were eminent figures in their own right reflected his enduring influence in Maharashtra, even though he was no longer there to direct affairs in person. Not poliicians alone but top personalities in every field including industry, the professions, society and all others who made a contribution to the life of Maharashtra remembered him with gratitude and felt his absence.

Not the least among them were the State's large and lively creative fraternity-men of letters, artists and performing artists, scholars, historians, journalist and writers. He himself was not only a voracious reader but a writer of good standard who might have developed into a considerable writer if he had not had to devote so much attention to political activities. Many of his political speeches were tinged with literary imagery, and indeed, with his fine sensibilities, he might have blossomed into a poet.

He liked meeting people to pick up not only hard information that would help him run the State better, but intellectual and philosophical; thoughts that might uplift the level of his functioning. He counted many friends among leaders of art and culture who included figurs such as Tarkalteerth Laxmanshashtri Joshi the scholar, G. D. Madhgulkar the poet. Lata Mangeshkar the singer with the golden voice, Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil the educationist, and H. R. Mahajani the editor.

He had set apart a special place for the pursuit of culture in the development programme of Maharashtra State. That was the purpose behind his sponsorship of the State Board of Literature and

Culture, to which he entrusted the monumental task of compiling a comprehensive encyclopaedia in Marathi named *Vishwa Kosh*.

It was Chavan's idea to introduce Maharashtra to Indians living in the northern part of the country by setting up institutions in Delhi to convey information about the State. Towards this end the Maharashtra Information Centre was established in the capital, equipped with a considerable library and reading room. The thoroughly modern man that he was, he had tremendous interest in modern methods of communications and he reorganised the information organisation to make its presence felt in the rest of India and the world.

As an eagle, soaring high in the air, still has its eyes on terra firma, so during all his years in Delhi, Chavan continued to follow with great interest the development in his own State. On momentous occasions of rejoicing and sorrow he made it a point to participate in the state's joys and travails. He was always present at ceremonies relating to major development projects of the kind that Jawahalal Nehru pictured as India's moden temples. He had himself been a builder of these shrines during his time in Maharashtra and later on the all-India level. He also liked to encourage with his presence occasions celebrating landmarks in the lives of those who had made noteworthy contributions to the State in any field of endeavour.

He rushed post haste to the sites of disaster to give consolidation and comfort to the sufferers and to alleviate their distress. With almost uncanny judgment he was able instantly to identify areas of greatest need and was among the first to initiate the machinery for providing relief and succour. When the great earthquak of December 1967 shook the Koyna area an threatened to engulf its inhabitants in panic, he was there among the stricken people, allaying their fears and reassuring and encouraging them. Using words and imagery that went straight to their hearts, he spoke to them with feeling on the subtaining power of the home and the native land, from which they should not flee in imaginary far of repeated disaster. The Government was there to give them every assistance in its power, and the honest faith in God would do the rest.

Yashwantrao Chavan had, during the years, to face many personal tragedies and something broke within him after he lost his

life-companion, Venutal, who had been with him through thick and thin and was a pillar of strength to him. Although her parent had given her in marriage to Chavan in great expectations when he promised to be a prosperous lawyer, she shared his tribulations uncomplainingly, putting his needs before everything.

Chavan, the architect of Maharashtra, who had led the grand celebrations at the inception of the State at which Jawaharlal Nehru presided, died a few months before the State's Silver Jubilee was to be celebrated. Like the earlier celebrations, those of the Jubilee in which the people participated with great enthusiasm, were proof of the satisfaction of the State's various communities with the sense of justice and impartiality of the Government whose policy was laid down by Yashwantrao Chavan.

Chavan was a man of many parts who showed the way to the people of Maharashtra towards complete emotional integration among themselves and with the people of the rest of the country. He was stern and kind, disciplinarian and indulgent, modern and traditional, all in the right proportion and in appropriate conditions. He reached out to the youth and impressed upon them the values which would prepared them to make the maximum contribution both to themselves and to the State. Ever conscious of the needs of the poor, he initiated a scheme for the economically backward classes under which students whose guardians' annual income was less than Rs. 900 were entitled to free education. Maharashtra was the first State in India to introduce such a radical step in the interest of weaker sections.

He put an end to the Watandari system which entitled vested interests to exploit poor landholders and agricultural labourers. Absentee landlordism was abolished, making the tiller the owner of the soil. He also regulated the use of agricultural land so as to derive optimum returns from it. To have road passengers from the hardships and high costs of the private transport system, the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation was created. The MSRTC has fulfilled Chavan's dream of having a bus run on every road in the State.

Yashwantrao was a man of action rather than of words. But the few words that he spoke were carefully weighted and were the result

of careful listening to schools of though including different element of the opposition. He respected the views of the majority even when they differed from those of his won; he believed in consensus rather than in compromise, and in compromise rather than confrontation. However while willing to make compromises to arrive at a constructive and honourable settlement he never compromised on essential principles.

In the worst of times and the most heated of debates he maintained the highest standards of parliamentary conduct. When he joined the Central Government as Defence Minister, he was not an adept speaker or parliamentarian; but by a studied effort and achieving mastery of the subject he quickly became a skilled debater able to put forth his point of view in a convincing manner and to deal with interruptions and questioning on the spot. In this way, towards the end, he developed into a attractive debater in the legislature as he was a compelling orator in public life.

His passion for maintaining a balance between different view-points exposed him now and gain to the criticism of being unduly non-committal. This, however, reflected more his innate preference of taking adequate time and care to determine his conclusions. His allegiance to the Indian National Congress was so strong that he could return to it after a brief interval without much strain. Not a man to stand on false pride, he had the moral courage required to rejoin the Congress that he had always identified with the struggles an aspiration of the Indian people.

Chavan laid great store by Gandhiji's principles of means and ends, and that is why his thoughts, statements and analyses of problems were heeded by men of good sense in all walks of life. He thought very each and every problem from all angles and from the effects it might have on different sections on its way to its final solution. He continuously thought over how the country could be made stronger, how common people could be made happy, and how petty, parochial thoughts could be banished. He had a discipline and orderly mind the product of nationalist and ideological thinking.

In all his half century and more of public service, inactive politics or in government, he had a wholly clean career, and the breath of scandal never touched him. He was a politician with a

difference, which was another factor in his popularity and his influence in all quarters, political or otherwise. The sobriquet of 'man of crisis' fits him aptly because only a man of proven character can summon the courage and the will to meet one crisis after another head on and finally vanquish them with the willing cooperation of all concerned. That is how he was able to earn the confidence of the downtrodden-neo-Buddhists, agricultural labour, minorities, farmers, educationalists., artists, and literary men.

That he won the hearts of all sections of people was evident in the last tributes that were showered upon him by his staunchest political adversaries as well as by his countless friends in the creative world.

## INDIRA GANDHI

Smt. Indira Gandhi, an outstanding world leader, a fervent nationalist, a truly unique and fascinating person of exquisite sensitivity and style, would have been seventy today. Would that the Almighty had spared her. Which of us would not have gone in her stead?

It is only natural that emotion wells up on such an occasion; the sense of loss engulfs us. Her unfailing thoughtfulness, her warmth, the call of her voice, her written an spoken word, her grace and elan—these are our heart's treasures now.

But she would not, surely, have us melancholy.

Indira Gandhi represented the brilliant power and vitality of democratic socialism and the human spirit-impelling and accelerating the evolution of an ancient people towards modernity.

India engrossed her. The national interest washer ruling passion. Her knowledge and understanding of things Indian, our heritage, her intuition of the inner pressures influencing events in diverse spheres, her feel for India's complex propernsities, her bonds with the people of India—all these were amazingly direct and spontaneous.

Poverty in our land, the sufferings of the hungry and the weak—these were always at the centre of the focus of her unflinching efforts for reconstruction and progress. Her goal was to

create the India of Bapu's and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's dreams, the India that Rabindranath Tagore yearned to see, the India that those great, compelling figures in our national history—whose paintings survey us here—strove passionately for. Towards this ideal she toiled, as would a daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, with awesome courage and indomitable resolution-ever-ready to sacrifice-that India's cause may prosper. Every field of nation-building activity benefited from her attention and guidance. Her capacity to wield great power for human good ensured this.

Indira Gandhi enhanced India's stature and prestige in the comity of nations. Never wavering, she upheld the values of humanism. The non-aligned movement, the missing against apartheid and oppression of every kind, the cause of global peace, equity and prosperity, were championed by her with daring outspokenness, peerless skill and great dignity. These reflected her deep perceptions of the historical process and the complex interplay of international currents. The world saluted her and acknowledged the far-reaching importance of her contributions. Friends and foes, alike, held her in the very highest esteem.

## MAHATMA GANDHI

Today it is forty years that Bapu attained martyrdom. It is a day of national introspection, a day for silent, collective prayer and reflection on the glory of our Great Master and the ideals that he held aloft to all human kind for all times. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his speech in the Constituent Assembly, on February 2, 1948 said of Bapu, "He was perhaps the greatest symbol of the India of the past, and may I say, of the India of the future...To praise him we are not worthy. It is almost doing him an injustice but to pass him by with words when the demanded work and labour and sacrifice from us.."The work we do, our labour and sacrifice on the path shown by him is the only fitting form of tribute we can place at his feet today.

---

From address at the unvelling of the portriait of Smt. Inddira Gandhi in the Central Hall of Parliament on 19 November 1987.

From speech at the unvelling of the statue of Mahamtma Gandhi at Gandhi Darshan Complex, New Delhi, on 30 January, 1988.

I must express our gratitude to the people of the Soviet Union for their fine gesture in contributing this state of the Father of our Nation. This represents one more bond in our friendship with that great nation—a nation which has appreciate the value that Mahatma Gandhi represented, of his leadership of the forces of humanism in world affairs. It was the great Lenin himself who proclaimed his admiration of the significance of Gandhiji to human kind marvelled at the power and nature of his leadership of the masses of India.

As Jawaharlalji has said: "Great men and eminent men have monuments in bronze and marble set up for them, but this man of divine fire managed in his lifetime to become enshrined in millions and millions of hearts...."

Forty years have gone and the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's life and work has increased a million-fold more.

## HAREKRUSHNA MAHATAB

Harekrushna Mahatab, by dint of his own ability and determination, came into the mainstream of life in the country.

Dr. Mahatab was involved in the Non-cooperation Movement, the Salt Satyagraha and the Civil Disobedience Movement. He underwent both simple and rigorous imprisonment. It would be well to remember that rigorous imprisonment in those days involved the wearing of heavy iron fetters and handcuffs. Such shackles represent to the British the means of repressing the nationalist spirit. However, to freedom-fighters like Mahatab, these represented the livery of the freedom movement, the very ornaments of patriotism.

In Hazaribag Jail where Mahatab was imprisoned, a co-prisoner was Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Later in 1938, it is significant that Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab was nominated to the Working Committee by none other than the great Subhas Chandra Bose. Mahatab was then the youngest member of that illustrious Committee. At the time of the Quit India Movement, Dr. Mahatab was one among a select band of the top leaders of the freedom

From speech at the unveiling of the portrait of Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab in the Central Hall of Parliament House on 7 August, 1989.

struggle imprisoned in the Ahmadnagar Fort. There he lived for almost three years in the Company of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant, Acharya Narendra Deve, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Shri Shankar Rao Deo and Prafulla Chandra Ghose. During this period, inspired by Panditji who wrote *Discovery of India*, Mahatab compiled a *History of Orissa* and also wrote several poems.

Mahatab's finest contribution, I feel, was in tackling the complicated political problems posed by princely states. These states were vestiges of carefully fashioned British policy keeping a number of local bulwarks of support for British rule. A thick mass of treaty and contractual relationships had been evolved between the British power and these princely states, building up the princes as a counterpoise to local nationalist aspirations. The question of the princely states stood as a formidable obstacle to the full unification of India.

After Independence, the Political and Home Department of Orissa with Dr. Mahatab as Premier, formulated a bold but very perceptive approach. Political justification, strategy and practical action was proposed by the Orissa Government to secure the merger of princely states in Orissa. Sardar Patel studied the Orissa approach with deep interest and the genius of the Sardar recognised instantly that here was a solution to the problem. It could be tested, Sardar Patel felt, first in Orissa. After the Orissa states were successfully merged. This experience was utilised for similar initiatives in the rest of the country which led eventually to the full integration of princely states with the Union of India.

There were many undulations in Dr. Mahatab's life subsequently—periods of light and shade of happiness and despair. But his work as Premises of Orissa, integrating the princely states in Orissa and thus providing a working model for the rest of the country must be recognised as a contribution of permanent value. In later years, as Chief Minister, Union Minister and Governor, Dr. Mahatab distinguished himself in various fields of nation-building activity.

Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab was a key figure from Orissa in the national political environment. His positive contribution deserve to be remembered.

## G. V. MAVALANKAR

Personally, I remember Mavalankarji as a gentle, kindly person, soft-spoken and understanding. He remained unaffected by the high honours and public respect which came his way. There was an innate modesty and refinement in him. These virtues arose from his deep avowal of the ideals of truth, freedom, justice, ahimsa and service. Mavalankarji was among those whose idealism and seriousness of purpose created in them the fortitude required to bear suffering and make sacrifices. As a steadfast follower of Mahatma Gandhi, has dedication, acumen and perseverance were valuable assets augmenting the nation-wide struggle for freedom.

After Independence, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's grain conception of our national polity began materializing. Parliamentary Democracy was a central feature that had to be established and developed. The role of the Speaker, however, performed would have indelible influence on growth of parliamentary democracy. Its remifications would travel beyond the Lok Sabha to other legislatures and representative bodies. A model presiding officer had existed when Dr. Rajendra Prasad occupied the Chair in the Constituent Assembly. The Speaker's Chair demanded an individual of rare caliber. Mavalankarji was brought to it and rose to his task as in the manner born. On election he observed: "Though a Congressman, it would be my duty and effort to deal with all members and sections of the House with Justice and equality; and it would be my duty to be impartial and remain above all considerations of party or of political career." That was a promise he kept throughout his tenure in the Chair. He contributed significantly to the fulfilment of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's object of building strong foundations for parliamentary democracy and making it a world-renowned feature of India's polity.

Mavalankarji's contribution to parliamentary practice and procedure are of historical as well as of enduring practical value. The Business Advisory Committee was set up by him to arrange the

From address at the meeting of the Members of Parliament to celebrate the Birth Centenary under the auspices of India Parliamentary Group on 26 November 1988.

most efficient use of legislative time. So was at the Committee on Government Assurances to enforce the right of members to information from Government. Procedures for Half-an-Hour Discussion. Short Duration Discussion and Calling Attention were devised and adopted at his instance. In regard to any question relating to breach of privilege of one House by the Members or officers of the other House, the present procedure originates from the views expressed by Mavalankarji. On the tabling of Adjournment Motions---something which I, fortunately, do not encounter in the Rajya Sabha—Mavalankarji recorded a ruling rightly considered classic. Successive Speakers of the Lok Sabha have applied that precedent in determining the admissibility of Adjournment Motions.

For his exemplary conduct of the business of the House, and his nobility and simplicity in day to day life, Malavankarji was naturally regarded everywhere with genuine respect. admiration and affection. When he passed away, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru referred to him as the Father of the Lok Sabha.

It is most appropriate therefore that the centenary of the birth of this faithful and able son of India should be celebrated nation-wide. As Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and of the Mavalankar Centenary National Committee, I congratulate the Central Government and the Speaker, Lok Sabha, on their initiative in this respect.

The occasion also induces, or should induce, I feel, a little introspection about what was a Nation ought to do to foster positive evolution of parliamentary democracy in our country.

In our system of parliamentary democracy the representative character of our legislature is among the highest and most special qualities. It is in our legislature that the hopes, the ambitions, the aspirations, the apprehensions, insights and perceptions of the people must find true and full expression. It is from the synthesis resulting from mature and free debate that the Real Will of the people should emerge and assert itself and thus pulsate powerful political influence on the public mind and the complex forces of growth. The great function of parliamentary democracy is to build a better future for the people. This is done not only by the quality of

legislation undertaken but by the social relevance, moral force and ideological intensity with which our legislatures can energise the public mind. Our legislatures therefore must necessarily perform the crucial role of at once being organs or the expression of the public mind and organs for the expression of the true public interest. Our legislature must need represent, as well as guide, the people. Only thus can their given task be performed.

In the present stage of historical development of our Nation, our legislatures have to function in a manner that would meet the needs of societal development. In our pluralistic in a manner that would meet the needs of societal development. In our pluralistic society, in keeping with our ancient traditions of tolerance and understanding, the citizens of our country must be helped to understand the true meaning and values of secularism. Amidst wide ranging differences of topography, climate, ethnicity, language, religion, local radiations, and vocations, our citizens must be helped by legislatures to absorb and appreciate the supreme value of national unity and the oneness of India that permeates all its diversities. In a polity highly stratified in terms of income distribution and opportunities for possession of units of wealth, our citizens must be guided fully to respect the concepts of socialism, democracy and Rule of Law. In an increasingly mercenary and materialistic world, our citizens must be helped to realise the importance of the duty of every individual citizen to contribute to the national weal, and of having an unshakable moral foundation for personal, social, and national endeavour. In conditions affected by widespread poverty and want, and misplaced value on personal acquisition of wealth, our citizens must be taught to recognise the true meaning of selfless service and dignity of labour. In a period of unprecedented momentum of scientific advance and international interaction, our citizens must be induced to absorb the positive effects of new technology and modernity whilst yet adhering to the elevating elements of our ancient ideals, ethicals values and culture. In the throes of competitive politics, our citizen must be convinced about the value of the Gandhian concept of Sarvodaya and insistence on purity of means. Forty-one years after Independence, our citizens must, more than ever, be imbued with the flaming spirit of sacrifice, patriotism and nationalism that blazed through our freedom struggle.

Our legislatures are expected to provide such stimulus as one of their cardinal functions. Failing in this, they would function without perspective or higher national purpose and, in fact, may cause great harm in place of great god.

We in India have a profound advantage in the task of suceeding as a parliamentary democracy. That advantage is conferred upon us by our ancient traditions and experience of democratic thought and democratic institutions. The significant and meaninful terms 'Ganatanatra'. 'Gananayak' and 'Gananpati' can be traced to our most ancient literature. Village democracies—Gram Sabhas—have evolved as a common-heritage across the length and breadth of the country. Mahatma Gandhi's ideal—Ram Swaraj and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of Panchayati Raj are logical continuations of democractic concepts from our ancient past. These concepts are natural companions of our long established traditions o tolerance, understanding and oneness. In the aggregate, as Indian, we have been equipped, over many centuries, almost automatically to live and work by parliamentary and democratic systems.

But let us bear in our minds that our democratic institutions can function properly only if certain norms are held inviolate. Let us not forget that democracy is precious and has constantly to be protected. One of the essential norms for parliamentary democracy is in regard to the mode of expression of view by legislators on the floor of the House. Writing in the *Harijan* on May 31, 1942. Mahatma Gandhi had said, "Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shut the doors of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents or, having listened, make fun of them. If intolerance becomes a habit, we run the risk of missing the truth".

Should we not ask ourselves whether any Opposition may be considered truly democratic if, as a matter of entrenched habit, it refuses to acknowledge the value of any positive achievement attained by the Government, and devotes itself instead not even to constructive criticism but to pettifogging and pointless remonstration? Let us remember Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's words, "We want criticism: we want opposition if you like: I do not mind that. But I do mind the spirit of excessive pessimism, as much as I dislike any croaking about India's future".

Tolerance and understanding are essential for parliamentary democracy as are a sense of proportion and a sense of propriety. Let us be honest with ourselves and face that truth: the elaborate procedures and practices associated with parliamentary democracy would amount to little more than meaningless paraphernalia if well recognised norms of parliamentary functioning are not scrupulously, and unfailingly observed. Public respect and attachment for democratic institutions should be recognised as vital factors for the continuance of parliamentary democracy, an indeed the democratic way of life. Nothing therefore should be done that makes this valuable institutional process look irrelevant to national well-being. It would be a pity if certain axioms of parliamentary democracy are shrugged away as tiresome cliches or mere platitudes.

I have referred to these aspects deliberately. I have done so in the hope that from our collective intersection on this occasion would arise a renewed sense of personal responsibility as participants in the democratic process.

## K. M. MUNSHI

K. M. Munshi was one of the grand men of politics and letters of the galaxy of noble intellectuals, thinkers and freedom fighters of India A person who was attracted to the Bhagawad Gita and its Karmayoga. He has given to us novels, dramas, biographies, a history of literature and a political history of Gujarat's most glorious epoch. He helped in the cultural development of not only the Gujarati life but the Indian life in general. He projected essentials of Indian culture in many ways, by building institutions, by emphasising sanskritic culture, by his insistence of integration of social life and by propagating the basic essentials of our culture, including the interpretation of Gita. A man from small beginnings he rose to be a towering personality and outstanding one in the spheres he worked. He left the stamp of creative ability on ever field that he touched. A man of courage and vision, Shri K. M. Munshi contributed in establishing institutions which have become bulwarks of Indian ethos and culture.

---

From speech at the Centenary Celebrations at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. New Delhi. on 30 December 1988.

We are celebrating this function in Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan which represents his idealistic approach in practical terms. Revered late Dr. Radhakrishnan as India's President said: "Munshiji was a brave freedom fighter, he was a Minister in Bombay, he was India's representative in Hyderabad in critical times, he was a member of Union Cabinet, he was Governor of Uttar Pradesh, he was a great advocate, but his greatest service is the establishment of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavans." It is a happy coincidence that we are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Vidya Bhavan also this year.

Munshiji was greatly attached to and great admirer of Indian cultural heritage. He wanted the world whole world to be acquainted with this glorious heritage. In the Twentieth Anniversary Celebration of the Bhavan on 10 February, 1957 he said; "We should not forget for a moment that the roots of India's life force are in its cultural and spiritual heritage." But he was not a blind follower of old traditions. He was fully aware of new developments in science and technology. He wanted people to integrate old spiritual heritage with modern scientific developments. He wanted the new generation to be familiar with our ancient heritage and modern science at the same time. He established Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan to fulfil this objective on 7 November, 1938. At the time of the establishment of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan he said that he and his associates were thinking of such centres to give concrete shape to bring together ancient heritage of knowledge with spiritual values and modern scientific knowledge an intellectual urges so that new literatures, new history and new culture may be created with this new confluence of ancient heritage and modern science. The establishment of Vidya Bhavan was with this deal. The motto of Vidya Bhavan from Rigveda:

> let noble thoughts come from the whole world:
>
> describes this beautifully.

He was a great admirer of ancient Indian heritage but like Kalidas he believed, *Purannmitayv ne Shadu Servem* etc, i.e., decide it not to be good, just because it is old and ancient. Reject it not as bad because it is foreign and modern. In short all that is old is not gold and all that is mod is not bad. Munshiji believed that for useful and happy system of education, a blending of the old and the new is a must.

K. M. Munshi was a dynamic and many-faceted personality—a great edcuationist, an eminent lawyer, an able administrator, a staunch patriot, a prolific writer and humanist, environmentalist and social reformer.

Munshi was concerned about environment and conservation long before it became a lobal concern. In fact, he initiated the Vanamahotsava movement when he was the Minister for Food and Agriculture. This single achievement of Munshi is enough to show clearly his forethought and vision.

More than all other things, I believe, Munshiji will be remembered for the emphasis he always laid on a strong and united India, a strong centre and an integrated judiciary. National integration is of utmost importance and it is imperative we cast aside differences of caste, region, religion and other fissiparious tendencies if the nation's growth is not to be hindered. It in this respect. I think that Munshi's life and message becomes relevant. He believed in the country's unity, its rich cultural heritage and felt the necessity of continuing and upholding this tradition. The Bhavan was born in this background.

In the last fifty years, the Bhavan has been engaged in spreading the message of Indian culture in India and abroad through a network of centres. It may be an exaggeration to say that it has blossomed into a premier cultural institution of which all of us can be proud. I have been watching the Bhavan's progress and I must say that its publications wing has rendered a very useful service to our people. Over a thousand titles with some ten million copies have come out already. The eleven volume History and Culture of the India People, which took 18 years to complete, is a unique publication which places historical facts in perspective from the country's point of view. In a foreword to the first volume, Munshi wrote;

> "In the course of my studies I had long felt the inadequacy of our so called India histories. For many years, therefore, I was planning an elaborate history of India in order not only that India's past might be described by her own sons, but also that the world might catch a glimpse of her soul as Indians see it."

Recently, I am told, it has come out with a culture curse' series, particularly for the student community. The Bhavan's Book University under the leadership of Shri Diwarkarji is very popular with students and teachers alike.

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan movement has emphasised the importance and inseparability of science and spirituality of education and self-discipline. I am sure the Bhavan will continue to do commendable service in the field of national integration and inspire our people to work for the all-round development of the nation.

It may not be out of place to make a reference to Munshi's partner in life, Leelavati. She was not the proverbial shadow of her husband but a personality by hereself. She was a tower of strength to Munshiji in all his activities.

I am sure the life and work of Shri K. M. Munshi will be a testimony to his total dedicated Indianness and will continue to inspire generations to come.

## EDATATA NARAYANAN

Edatata Narayanan was a stalwart amongst the journalists of his time and he has been, I feel, appropriately referred to as the doyen of Indian journalism. Those of us who have been associated with processes of political, economic and social development, and have observed the evolution of the press in India, would appreciate the degree of influence exerted by Edatata Narayanan on his contemporaries as well as on the general ethos informing journalism in India.

The regard, and, in fact, the esteem in which he was held by the foremost thinkers is an index of his qualities and his achievements as an intellectual and as a patriot. It is, more importantly, an index of the causes that he dedicated himself to, with a devotion that was total.

Essentially, Edatata Narayanan was a man of spirit. The flames of patriotism and socialism burned brightly within him. One could

---

From speech at release of book on 17 September, 1987.

see, in his eyes, the fervor and turmoil that engrossed and energised him and drove him relentlessly on. He was a man of impeccable integrity; one who had intellectual honesty and courage of conviction. Such men are rare, and their life work does not evaporate after them, but endures and enriches the environment in which they lived.

It gives me genuine pleasure, therefore, to see the tender care with which this book has been put together, I feel it would adorn many a shelf in the months and years to come.

I hope that those that have to do with the media, with public opinion formation, with the press in India, would appreciate the merit significance of what Edatata Narayanan wrote on the context when he wrote it, and the style with which he penned away his thoughts.

As Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru said, in his speech at the All India Newspaper Editor's Conference, in New Delhi, on September 17, 1952, "It is a platitude to talk about the great opportunities and power the newspapers and the press have in the modern world. That power—wherever there is any power—can be exercised both in the right and the wrong way."

Let us remember that the Indian press has a record of service to the national ethos that evokes pride and a glow of satisfaction. In shaping the struggle for freedom, it was the press in India that performed an invaluable and indeed a historic role in bringing the common man and the masses into the mainstream of nationalist politics. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshav Chandra Sen, Pherozeshah Mehta, Dadabhai Naroroji, Gokhale, Lokmanya Tilak, C. Y. Chintamanti, Mahatma Gandhi, C. Rajagopalachari and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru—and many other men of stature—used the press for imbuing the Nation with their ideas on political and social transformation. It is their work and their modes of doing it that forms a priceless heritage for the press today.

I should like therefore to recall here Bapu's own words: "The sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper is a great power. But just as an unchained torrent of water submerges the whole countryside and devastates crops, even so an uncontrollable pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves

more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within."

It is, I feel, a noble duty for our country's intellectuals, to express the creative urges and need of our people and assist actively in the conscious evolution of our Nation in fulfilment of our cherished concepts of Democratic Socialism, Secularism and Peace. Edatata Narayanan's was a mind that contributed brilliantly, and prolifically, to this process, and as the years pass, I am sure that the significance of his work would be appreciated and emulated by more and more of us.

The task that Edatata Narayanan committed himself to, needs such emulation—both in term of the work to be done and the manner and atmosphere for its performance.

## JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

May I say how happy I am to be in your midst today. Places associated with intellectual effervescence and the search for truth do indeed have such a distinctive atmosphere. In the Indian sub-continent, visitor to Nalanda or Takshashila—seats of ancient universities over twenty centuries ago—can still sense their uplifting ambience Those universities were destroyed long back, yet their influence is tangible and can be felt. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Cambridge, with its unbroken existence of more than seven centuries, should be perceived exuding a similar ethos. Returning to Cambridge, brings back so many memories. I remember, particularly, the intellectual brilliance of great minds with whom I had the opportunity to interact. It is indeed a pleasure for me to be in Cambridge again.

Jawaharlal Nehru came here from Harrow in October 1907 to read for the Natural Sciences Tripos and has mentioned his association with Cambridge. In his *Autobiography*, he referred to the three years that he spent here as: "three quiet years with little disturbance in them, moving slowly like the sluggish Cam. They were pleasant years, with many friends and a gradual widening of

---

Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture, 1989, "Nehru's Internal Impact on India as Prime Minister" at Cambridge, on 13 November 1989.

the intellectual horizon. "It was a formative stage in his life and although he returned to the land of the mighty Ganga and plunged into led and gave tremendous force to a great flood of events in the Indian sub-continent. Nehru retained an emotional link with Cambridge and valued his experience here. A chance remark by him to me about the exhilarating atmosphere of this University induced my own association with Cambridge.

The centenary of the birth of Jawaharlal Nehru is being celebrated in India and around the world. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that the centenary is being observed with enthusiasm in the United Kingdom. Indeed, among the important factors that help to strengthen friendship between Britain and India, is the admiration and respect which the people of our two countries have for Nehru. The Nehru Memorial Lecture affords and excellent way of commemorating his life and work, and reinforcing Indo-British friendship.

Lord Romsey has asked that I might take as the theme for my address: "Nehru's Internal Impact as Prime Minister". He explained that there had been lectures in the past dealing with Nehru's impact on the world and on foreign affairs and his qualities as a statesman, and advised that I should be as forthright in expressing my views as would enable a fuller understanding of the existing portrait of Nehru. The point was well made.

In speaking on the subject, I should like, however, first to lodge a caveat. My association with Nehru, which grew over a period of twenty-eight years and my involvement in the processes he guided, inevitably make it more than a little difficult not to be subjective. So I am aware, and would forewarn you, that an element of sentiment may seep into my appraisal. However, I am reassured by the thought that Lord Romsey would certainly have provided for such a possibility.

It is with these feelings in mind that I decided briefly to detach myself from commitments at home and accepted the very thoughtful invitation extended to me to deliver the 1989 Nehru Memorial Lecture. The views expressed by me in the Lecture are personal and are not necessarily those of the Government of India.

## II

When India achieved Independence in August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru's being at the helm of affairs constituted an asset of tremendous value. Nehru was uniquely suited to assume that responsibility. Across the length and breadth of the country, India's masses held him in the highest esteem. He was the very symbol of the resurgence of India. For almost thirty years he had laboured for the cause of freedom, had suffered personal hardships and prolonged spells of imprisonment. Nehru had become the principal theoretician of the Congress Party, as well as an important strategist. His caliber as an administrator had also been tested and proven during the Interim Government when he was Premier. I vividly remember the fascinating with which Nehru was regard by the people. There was more to it than mere adulation. The feeling was closer to entrancement. An extraordinary relationship had evolved and matured over the years between the Indian people and Jawaharlal Nehru—a relationship based on profound faith in each other. At the heart of this almost mystical bond was a sense of identification. The masses sensed in Nehru, and knew within themselves, that in him they had a leader with an exceptional congruence of ethical and moral values supreme courage, compassion, understanding and devotion. They knew also that this powerful compound of qualities together with Nehru's enromous orgnizational ability comprised a great force for public good.

On Jawaharlal Nehru's part, similarly, there was powerful yearning to understand and serve the people. He had travelled extensively throughout India in towns, cities and villages. In his Autobiography Nehru wrote: "I was getting into touch with the people of India in their millions...The excitement of this adventure held me, this physical and emotional communion with vast numbers

---

In India the word is used to mean equal respect for all faiths and religions, and stands for a philosophy of tolerance and co-existence. Seeming from the Right Vedic period, the core idea of secular though is that while there is one Absolute Truth, there may be several alternative and equally valid paths of logical and intuitive access to it. (*Aikam sat wipra bahudha wadanti*). Such a concept of secularism is markedly different from its commonly understood meaning in the West.

of people. It was not the felling of being in a crowd, one among many, an being swayed by the impulses of the crowd. My eyes held those thousands of eyes: we looked at each other, not as stranger meeting for the first time, but with recognition...a murmur of greeting rose from that assembled multitude and eveloped me in its warm embrace."

This relationship ripened, and was magnified and enriched as the years went by; it was a crucial force-element in India's development.

### III

The Mahatma had called him. "Pure as crystal', and also described him as the 'chosen instrument.' In my view, three major sets of factors moulded Nehru's personality. First, there was the influence of his father Motilal Nehru—an outstanding man of great ability and vision, who arranged that Jawaharlal's upbringing and education heighten his exceptional potential. Although an only son, Jawaharlal was sent to distant Harrow where he was exposed to the strenuous but foundation-building regimen of that eminent public school. Three years at Harrow were followed by another three at Cambridge where he read the natural Sciences Tripos. This was a period in which Jawaharlal developed and trained his intellectual abilities to a fine pitch. A command over the English language, sensitive awareness of forces of history, acquaintance with the temper and mood of scientific enquiry, sense of equality and fairplay, a deep inner reserve of determination and fortitude—all these elements came to form part of his personality.

Second, there was the influence on Nehru arising from his deep study of Indian and world history, of science, law and economics. His remarkable books: *Glimpses of World History, An Autobiography* and *The Discovery of India* are masterly works indicative of encycloaedic knowledge and profound introspection. The Glimpses was completed by January 1934, his *Autobiography* in February 1935 and the Discovery by September 1944. They reflect his amazingly incisive and perceptive understanding of social, economic and political forces the world over and the course of diverse political system at work in Western society, Fascist states and in Communist Russia.

Third, there was the great and abiding influence on Nehru of Mahatma Gandhi and his emphasis on the supreme importance of ethical and moral values. This influence was augmented by Nehru's experience as a leader of the Indian struggle for freedom.

As a consequence of these three sets of factors, Nehru was naturally drawn to commit himself to the great cause of liberating the human spirit. Democracy, Secularism and Socialism—inter-connected ideals—gained his absolute commitment as means to such liberation. In the last few line of his book *The Discovery of India,* Nehru wrote: "Man's dearest possession is life, and since it is given to him but once, he must so live...that dying he can say: 'All my life and my strength were given to the first cause of the world—the liberation of mankind.

Anyone knowledgeable about India would be aware of the natural political instinct of the people of India and their acquaintance with diverse political concepts. Poverty and illiteracy have not interfered with the typical ability of the masses to exercise political judgment of a remarkable order. This is the product of national experience over thousands of years. Democracy, the republican form of Government, awareness of human rights, the need for an egalitarian society, are part of the ancient history, mythological tradition and folklore in India. The notion that liberal thought reached India from the West misses the truth. Inherent in India's national ethos has been a composite philosophy of universal humanism based on moral and ethical values, pluralism and tolerance.

During the struggle for freedom, the life-work of great leaders and thinkers invoked and enhanced such awareness in the public mind.

Nehru's own mission in life was in dynamic harmony with powerful and nation-wide urges within Indian society. Essentially, Nehru was guiding India's discovery of certain values innate to the national ethos and immanent in the genius of her people. Nehru's impact was, and is, in direct proportion to the ascendance of those values in national life. The re-structuring of political, economic and social features of India's national identity was a direct consequence of such a process.

In his eloquent speech in the Constituent Assembly on August 14, 1947, on the eve of the attainment of Independence, Nehru had said: "Freedom and power bring responsibility...The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe very tear from every eye...as long as there are tears and suffering so long our work will not be over."

## IV

The gigantic task of national re-constructioron lay before him and the people of the country. An estimate of the dimension of the task may be gained from an assessment made some years earlier by Nehru of conditions obtaining at that time. On January 26, 1930. Nehru, in his element as a revolutionary, described the effects of British rule. He said: 'The British Government...based itself on the exploitation of the masses and ruined India economically... Politically, India's status has never been so reduced as under the British regime. Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings, and our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us. Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us think that we cannot look after ourselves or put a defence against foreign aggression."

The actual significance and dimensions of Nehru's leadership in India in the task of national reconstruction and treatment of complex social, economic and political problems can be appreciated better when viewed against the background of British policies operating earlier.

Any organized government, like any piece of machinery has an intended purpose. Its design and operation are advised by that purpose. It must be admitted, that almost continuously through the period of British rule in India, there was expression of enlightened, humanistic opinion in the British Isles stressing the importance of human rights, protesting against domination based on use or threat of use of force. Experience gained from America was cited as relevant. The Indian uprising in 1857 led to critical studies. From time to time, particularly after 1868 when news about India came in across the telegraph in greater quantum and speed, opinion was voiced frequently against reported instances of exploitation,

corruption and cruelty. A telling instance was the wave of shock, horror and introspection that swept the British public following the Hunter Commission of Enquiry into the Jallianwalah Bagh Massacre in April 1919. (A British General had opened fire on an unarmed crowd of children, women and men in a walled enclosure, killing over a thousand and had later stated that he would certainly have used machine guns had these been at hand). A vigilant public in Britain, assisted by an alert press and opposition, often expressed sympathy and concern for the people of India. On the other hand there was no dearth of those believing or propagation the idea of the "white man's burden" in terms of the "duty to rule and civilize lesser people in distant lands and climes". Such opinion was supplemented by those who stressed that British rule was essential for the maintenance of peace and good order in Indian and for the protection of the minority communities from repression by the majority. Indignation was expressed that Indians were not adequately grateful to the British for their rule. In other words, there was a distinct belief spread that altruistic purposes accounted for the British presence in India and informed its internal governance.

Whatever the publicly expressed rationale, the inner strategic thought of imperial policy makers was in terms of the perceived requirements of imperial security and of the imperial economic system.

India was a crucially important bulwark in the imperial global security system. British interests in West Asia. British assessment of the potential of another Great Power holding sway in the Asian land mass, the vital importance of strategic sea-lanes traversing the Indian Ocean, considerations of British interest in South-East Asia an along the Pacific rim:-all these added to India's strategic importance. Simultaneously. India was a major supplier of natural resources, raw material and semi-finished goods and a major source of exportable manpower. However, India's great size and

---

A considerable section of the intelligentsia in India regarded British royalty as being sympathetic towards and concerned about India. Consequently, this had a bearing on India precipitations of Lord Mountbatten, and later, the Indian willingness to join the Commonwealth having the British monarch as its Head.

population, consciousness in India of its ancient values and civilization, the country-wide economy based on self-sufficient village and traditional excellence in crafts and skills, were countervailing factors. Therefore, the achievement of imperial security and economic objectives was possible only on the basis of very carefully worked strategy, the implementation of which rested with the internal government in India.

Accordingly the system aimed at counterpoising India's numerous religious, regional and economic groups against each other, maintaining a system of Princely States obliged for their existence of British Power, retaining a largely kulak-oriented agrarian structure, adopting fiscal and financial measures to phase out self-sufficient village economies and increase the market for British manufactured goods, developing a port based economy with rail and road penetration in the hinterland, devising an education system to supply low level manpower needs and maintaining a large, locally recruited, military and police establishment. Over time, the imperial systemic India was developed to subserve these purposes more efficiently.

## V

After Independence, the mission of national reconstruction therefore involved nothing less than a total systemic transformation of the Indian polity. This has to be completely in accordance with values basic to India's ethos.

Among the foremost tasks taken in hand was the preparation of a written Constitution of India. Nehru played a stellar, guiding role in this process—ensuring that the Real Will of the people was accurately expressed through the Constituent Assembly.

Thus it was that India resolved to be a Socialist, democratic Republic, securing to all its citizens Justice—Social, Economic and Political; Liberty—of thought, belief, faith and worship; Equality—of status and opportunity, promotion of the dignity of the individual and national unity, India opted for the parliamentary form of government based on democratic socialism, secular outlook and zealous safeguarding of human rights.

Centuries of experience under successive regimes of autocratic nature had suddenly been overtaken by the coming into being of the worlds largest democracy. One might say a political miracle had been wrought. The scepter had passed to the people, the masses. Nehru had been instrumental in ensuring the introduction of universal adult franchise.

Provisions relating to Fundamental Right comprise a vital feature of the Constitution. Key human freedoms were grouped under the Right to Equality. Right against Exploitation, Right to Freedom of Religion, Cultural and Educational Rights, and Rights to Constitutional Remedies.

The Constitution also enunciated Directive Principles of State Policy, which, though not enforceable by any court, are fundamental in the governance of the country and which are to be applied by the State in making laws. These articulate the democratic egalitarian and progressive aspiration of the people.

The federal structure of India's polity, the system of parliamentary democracy, the Legislative, Judicial and Executive division of State functions, the political, professional nature of the Civil Service and Armed Forces were key features of the Constitution which identified and expressed the popular urge innate to India's rhythm.

The sub-continental size of the country, its heterogeneous population, economic characteristics, political ethos, national philosophy and goals, could hardly have been served better.

Although Nehru dismissed the significance of his own contribution saying he was only one of the humble individuals who had something to do with the Constitution, unquestionably he had been the moving spirit behind the fashioning of the supreme instrument representing the Real Will of the people of India. The history of the previous two and a half decades bears the stamp of his contributions in promoting the seminal political approaches and ideology eventually expressed by the Constitution. Simultaneous to his intensive involvement in galvanizing the masses in the struggle for freedom, he had been deeply engrossed in formulating constitutional and political philosophy suited to Indian aspirations

and had worked steadily to build a country-wide acceptance fot it. He had ignited in a whole nation the fire that burned within him and interpreted the nation's spirit to itself.

Secularism, Parliamentary Democracy, Socialism and Growth represented intensely held aspirations. The dream to see India free and receiving the bounty of progressive development had sustained India's leadership during the hardships suffered in the struggle for freedom. With the making of Constitutional law wedded to these ideals, an important milestone in national advancement had been reached. But the immensely more important task of achieving practical results remained. The burden of making the system function optimally, of establishing its operational value, was also borne, in the main, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru.

### VI

Deliberate communalization of Indian politics has been an imperial objective for over four decades before Independence. The creation of Pakistan an the trauma of Partition had led to momentous upheavals—tectonic in magnitude. An atmosphere vitiated by violence, destruction and chaos threatened the nascent nation. Nehru's emotional leadership during the tension-filled early months of Independence evoked admiration. He helped bring sanity back by personal example of decisive intervention and effectively controlled a dangerous situation. Peace and tranquillity were established. Gradually but definitively the communal atmosphere was dispelled. Rehabilitation of riot victims was taken up on an intensive scale. As passions subsided in response to firm and sensitive measures. Nehru's leadership helped to evolve and restore the traditional and deeper relations of friendship and amity between different communities and to reassure both the minority and majority communities about the security of their long term interest in the secular way of life.

Nehru's leadership in the aftermath to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi provided another instance of the impact of his deep insight into the national psyche. Though benumbed by the Assassination, Nehru steeled himself to the tasks at hand. Maintaining a sane and stable national atmosphere was the first

requirement. His broadcasts over radio reached millions of hearts all over the country and fortified the masses in a period of intense shock, shame and remorse.

Building the emotional unity of India was also facilitated by the major initiatives taken by the Central Government for the political integration of India through merger of erstwhile Princely States with the Union of India. This task was accomplished by Nehru and Sardar Vallabahai Patel, the Union Home Minister, in the first couple of years of Independence, Subsequently, by re-organising Indian States on linguistic basis, Nehru further strengthened conditions of emotional unity within the diversity of India.

In subsequent years, the ethos of social integration in India has asserted itself. The spirit of oneness has deepened and become more extensive. The body politic of India has progressed significantly in neutralizing the old poison of communalism. It is not as if communal friction does not take place. It does, and takes a fearsome toll in terms of death and destruction. But the people of India have learnt that such incidents are the handiwork of minute number of mischief-mongers whose motivations are entirely irreligious and criminal. It has been realized that in any communal incident it is the poor and the weak that suffer—irrespective of their religion—and it is the criminal or the agent saboteur who gains. Equally, it is now evident to the people that mutual brotherhood permeates all well-meaning people in society and that the common people of India, the masses, are peace loving, value the Rule of Law, and respect the nation's age-old tradition of social cohesion and harmony. Such positive development of the social ethos owes much to Nehru's leadership. He had expressed the resolve and hope that "India will be a land, as in the past, of many faiths, equally honoured and respected, but of one national outlook...the tolerant nationalism which, believing in itself and the genious of its people takes full part in the establishment of an international order." Nehru had visualized India's regaining in full measure, the ancient ethos of the universal humanism where in the dignity of every human being and his freedom were respected.

## VII

There was an obvious organic linkage between Secularism and the commitment to democratic ideals, Nehru had a normative impact in the establishment, consolidation and growth of Parliamentary Democracy. As Congress President in 1936, he had referred to the formation of "full democracy" as an essential goal. Earlier, in 1931 at the Karachi Session of Congress, Nehru had advocated "adult franchise" on a "mass basis". He said: "I am a convinced believer in adult franchise for men and women, and, though I realize the difficulties in the way, I am sure that the objections raised to its adoption in India have no great force and are based on the fears of the privileged classes and interests." The idea of a Constituent Assembly was proposed by him. (Its merit was endorsed by Mahatma Gandhi who acknowledged Nehru's "superior knowledge of the technicalities of democracy!")

The Constitution had created democratic structures at the federal and States levels and there were Directive Principles of State Policy regarding promotion of democratic institution at village level also. By force of personal commitment and seriousness of purpose, Jawaharlal. Nehru ensured that these institutions functioned meaningfully and were established firmly. By his approach Nehru helped consolidate importance of Parliament, the position and dignity of its presiding officers and its proceedings, rules and conventions. He lent his immense popularity and the powers 'and prestige of his office as Prime Minister to consolidate and strengthen the institution of Preliminary Democracy. By his exemplary attitude towards matters pertaining to Parliament, Nehru set a perfect model which every subsequent Prime Minister could benefit by following.

Government's responsibility to Parliament was firmly established by him. He was particular about attending every sitting during Sessions. Questions concerning his departments were invariably answered by him personally. He insisted that replies to questions tabled for answer should be full and informative in nature. It was unthinkable that any evasive or ambiguous reply would be

offered by any Minister to a question. A similar approach was brought to bear in respect of Motion before the House for debate. Nehru would quite often intervene in debates and enrich the scope of discussion. He was meticulous about observing parliamentary etiquette. A moving and illustrative instance occurred in the last year of his life. Despite critical illness he attended every sitting that he could in Parliament. The Presiding Officer, noticing Nehru's condition, asked him not take the trouble of rising to reply to questions but to speak while seated. But Nehru's punctilious sense of parliamentary decorum was unfailing. Each time, despite the pain, he would struggle to force himself to his legs and only then speak. There were other ways in which Nehru developed sound traditions of Parliamentary Democracy. His attitude *vis-a-vis* criticism provides a telling illustration. He valued criticism and hoped to gather grains of truth from it. But more than that it was to him a matter of principle—the right to criticism was part and parcel of Parliamentary Democracy, however, stinging the criticism may be—so long as it were based on an honest interpretation of facts. In a speech on January 28, 1957 he said: "The whole parliamentary system of Government is based on criticism...if people were not allowed to speak and criticism Government fully and in the open it would not be parliamentary Government. It would not be proper democracy. I welcome criticism in Parliament. In fact I welcome criticism from our own party members." Similarly regarding the relationship between the majority and the minority, Nehru said: "The minority...has a very important part to play. Naturally the majority by the mere fact that it is a majority must have its way. But a majority which ignores the minority is not functioning in the true spirit of Parliamentary Democracy." Nehru treated the Opposition with due consideration though in his time the Opposition was in tiny minorities in Parliament as well as in the States. It is important to appreciate that he did so not just out of a sense of large heartedness or magnanimity. That was not the point that weighed with him materially. What really mattered to him was his sense of duty and responsibility by the system of Parliamentary Democracy. His sense of responsibility to the system was not confined to concern about this own party or Government's position. It included the Opposition as well. Similarly in connection with the process of elections, Nehru

upheld the very highest standards. He insisted that "the manner of winning or losing is even more important than the result and that it was better to lose in the right way than to win in the wroing way." He said: "If success comes through misconceived effort or wrong means then the value of that success is lot." In the matter of fielding candidates he used to reject any suggestion about fielding individuals to match the communal or caste composition of a constituency to gain advantage of local parochial bias. In selecting party candidates for election he placed the highest importance on the integrity and reputation of person and refused to agree to a party ticket accorded unless he was satisfied in this respect.

The smooth functioning of Parlimentary Democracy during Nehru's Prime Ministership induced and unshakeable permanence and strength to the system. Successive general elections for Parliament and for State Legislatures were held in a free and impartial manner. Changes of Government following elections occurred smoothly proving the efficacy of the system and the strong roots that it had developed.

Nehru also acted energetically to develop parliamentary institutions at district and village level. The process of democratic decentralization was forcefully taken forward under Nehru's initiatives and led to an involvement of the masses in the rural areas in day to day governance. In mammoth public meetings of hundreds of thousands of village folk, Nehru would share with them his thinking on a wide variety of national and international issues. He had confidence in the judgment of the India public and tried to involve the people in every aspect of modern development. This also helped in giving a wider base and greater stability to Parliamentary Democracy in India. Nehru used to say that no Government can afford to Ignore the urges of the Common people and that democracy is based on those very urges. The broad thrust of his effort was to create democratic institutions which were ultimately the projection of the people's character; thinking and aims.

## VIII

Nehru's emphasis on building democratic institutions in India was not a uni-dimensional effort. Repeatedly he had stressed the

importance of giving democracy economic content. He constantly had before him the task of alleviating India's poverty and building a prosperous egalitarian social order. His orientation towards socialism was determined by a harmonious combination of liberal and radical thought. His Presidential Address at the Lahore Session in 1929, his speech at the Karachi Session in 1931 (when Congress adopted the Resolution on Fundamental Rights), his Presidental Addresses at Lucknow in 1936, and Faizpur in 1937 gave positive impetus to socialist policy formulation by Congress. But it is very important to appreciate that Nehru's concept of socialism was not of a dogmatic creed. Nehru abhorred the thought of a regimented society and violence to human rights. Nehru was pained by the experience in other parts of the world where adoption of socialism had entailed a curbing of individual rights. He saw socialism as a means of individual human development. He said: I hope socialism does not kill or suppress individuality; indeed I am attracted to it because it will release an innumerable number of individuals from economic and cultural bondage."

Nehru's emphasis on democracy with socialism, based on human rights and moral and ethical values had a significant impact. Among other things, the scope for angers of Communism in India was distinctly limited.

It was Nehru's significant contribution to the history and development of modern political thought in that he spelt out and applied the concept of democratic socialism within the parliamentary form of Government. Such a system enabled India to build the public sector as a prime mover for industrialiation and infrastructural growth, balanced regional development. And equitable distribution of wealth. At the same time it afforded freedom for private enterprise and individual talents, desires and energies. The impact of this philosophy was seen in the approach towards the management of national resources to achieve growth with social justice. Such an approach automatically entailed introducing a system of national planning whereby a comprehensive survey of strengths and weaknesses in the economy was undertaken and physical, financial and human resources were scientifically allocated to achieve specific economic goals in the most efficient

manner. At that time the combination of socialism, a planned economy and parliamentary democracy, was considered incompatible by political thinkers from the capitalist as well as the communist countries. But it represented a middle path and a synthesis best suited to Indian aspirations and requirements. In respect, it is evident that the strong basis for India's economic growth in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy was made possible only by integrated national planning by the federal government. The National Planning Committee set up by the Congress in 1938 in which Nehru took a leading role had prepared the ground for such an approach.

## IX

With the background for clear ideological commitments to growth with social justice and being aware of the richness of India's natural resources on one hand and India's poverty on the other. Nehru was seized with the mission to achieve accelerated economic progress. The strategy of growth was formulated by him after considering two major alternatives. The first strategic option was the Consumer Industry Approach which rested on the rationale that initially the effort should be focussed on organising assembling industries mainly by using imported material and financing assembling industries mainly by using imported materials and financing growth of basic and heavy industry with capital accumulated from aggregate value added and exports. The advantage in such an approach was that it demanded lesser initial capital investment and was therefore most suited to India's ways and means position at that time. On the other hand there was the Basic Industries Approach which rested on the rationale that, although high investments in building a heavy industrial base would mean a strain on resources in the initial phase, the scientific, technical and industrial capability his built up would in the long run, offset the burden of initial high investment and would also help promote self-reliance.

Four key objectives were set: (i) a sizable increase in national income to raise the standard of living in the country, (ii) rapid industrialization with special emphasis on development of basic and heavy industries. (iii) large expansion of employment opportunities,

and (iv) reduction of inequalities in income and wealth and a more even distribution of economic power. These objectives remain unchanged in the economic policy of India. The entire effort of the planning process and the industrial and agricultural strategies in subsequent years has been based on a mission to fulfil these objectives.

The growth of the steel heavy electricals, heavy engineering, machine tools, power, atomic energy, railways, communications, petrochemicals, defence production, fertilizers, shipping and automative sectors of India's economy over the last four decades was made possible by such an overall economic strategy.

Simulataneously, three other important initiatives were undertaken. First, the investment in basic and heavy industrial growth was linked with promotion of medium and small-scale industries, and cottage and village industries. Emphasis was placed also on development of the cooperative sector both for industry and agriculture. This aimed at developing supportive linkages across these sectors, balanced regional growth and revival of the rural economy. Second, the private sector was afforded a wide field at opportunity for industrial enterprise except in a few strategic sectors. The role assigned to the public sector involved huge investments in long gestation project on which the immediate return of capital invested was low but which would help build essential economic infrastructure and pioneer growth for balanced regional development. It could not have been possible for the private sector to organise the financial and non-financial resources required or such an effort. The Public sector therefore did not have a merely commercial objective in terms of a return of profit over capital invested. There was the strategic objective of developing strong foundations and infrastructre for India's economy and stimulation of synergistic inter sectorial linkages in the economy. It is noteworthy that progress by India in the capital goods sector and other key sectors would not have been possible without Nehru's lead in these directions.

Development of India's agriculture in terms of quantum of production and productivity also received very high priority. Nehru organized initiatives by the Central and the State Government for agrarian reform not only to achieve an equitable distribution of

wealth but to increase farm efficiency. The need to make India self sufficient in food production was also a key objective compelled by experience of recurrent famine in earlier decades. (From 1800 to 1900 more than 32 millions died of starvation in India. As many as 30 famines occurred in the 90 years from 1857 to 1947. The Bengal famine of 1943 alone taking a toll of 3 million lives). The relationship between agriculture and industry and the potential for agro-industrial development was also stressed. The predominantly agricultural composition of India necessitated development of agriculture for an improved standard of living the rural areas. In a speech at a meeting of the National Development Council Nehru said: "Agriculture is more important than anything else because agricultural production sets the tone to all economic progress."

## X

The building of a new economic society based on agricultural as well as industrial capability required full emphasis on promotion of science and technology, scientific research and development establishments, and an efficacious relationship between Government and scientific effort in the country. Nehru took the lead in building scientific establishments and a scientific culture in India. Successive Five Years Plans laid emphasis on building up of national laboratories and research institutions. Nehru personally formulated the Government of India's Scientific Policy. The Scientific Policy Resolution of 1958 sets out key objectives aimed at connecting Science and Technology with the task of national reconstruction. It pervade the way for the growth of pure, applied and educational science and scientific research, training, and involvement of scientific and technical personnel or modernizing agriculture, industry and defence. It also recognized the need to give science and scientists a position of prestige in India. The effects of Nehru's priority to scientific advancement for national growth are visible in every sector of India's economy today.

In his policy of scientific growth, Nehru stressed, however, the importance of harnessing the great power of science only for goals of human betterment he said: "Science and Technology have freed humanity from many of its burdens and given us the new perspective and great. This power can be used for the good of all at wisdom

governs our actions: but if the world as mad or foolish it can destroy itself just when great advance and triumphs are almost within its grasp." Nehru's concern for peace and his ethical and moral view regarding the use of science led to India's commitment to the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

It is evident that with Nehru's leadership fully attuned to India's urges and needs. There was a profound and positive changes in India. Everything he did was with a long range perspective: of the national interest and of the good of humankind. The federal structure of India's polity: the system of Parliamentary Democracy; the Legislative, Judicial and Executive division of State functions; the professional, apolitical nature of the Civil Services and Armed Forces; the introduction of a planned economy with the public sector having an infrastructural role: the policy of industrialization emphasising investment in the capital goods sector, a role for the public, private and cooperative sectors as well as village industry: development of science and technology: and atomic energy; the reforming of agrarian system: the powerful coordinated thrust for improving agricultural production: the creation of major irrigation and power system: the priority for developing the youth of the country: creation of Scientific Temper: the strengthing of the cultural traditions and social ethos of the nation:—all these deverse and yet interrelated aspects of national life, received creative impulses from Nehru. "Growth with Social Justice' and 'self reliance' became important and normative concepts in the strategy for national reconstruction. Nehru and India had advanced significantly in pushing through a second non-violence revolution following, that of 1947.

Nehru's leadership in India the political life during the freedom struggle, and later as Prime Minister, had a salient effect on the position of the Prime Minister. Gradually, and probably against his own wishes, there was a transition from the Cabinet form of Government to the Prime Ministerial form of Government. As Sir Ivor Jennings in his book 'Cabinet Government' has said about a British Prime Minister: "the Prime Ministers' actual authority has tendered to increase...He is, rather, a sun around which planets revolve..he owes his majority to the choice of the electorate.

Generally a party obtains office because of a general selection. A general election is, primarily, an election of a Prime Minister. The wavering voters who decide elections support neither a party nor a policy, they support of a leader." Nehru's long tenure in the position of Prime Minister combined with his mass popularity and adulation as a hero of the freedom struggle in effetct led to substantial concentration of power in him.

Yet, there is no question of autocratic conditions surviving the polity designed by him. The system of checks and balances devised under Nehru's leadership is so carefully installed that even if only one institutional check remains functional, conditions of disguised dictatorship cannot go unchallenged. Besides successive elections have proved the maturity and mettle of the Indian electorate.

As such a fully safe system of parliamentary democracy seems to have been evolved. The impact of such an achievement is incalculable, particularly in the region of India's location. Twenty-five years have gone by since Nehru passed away. But far from his influence waning, there is in India, and I believe elsewhere also, growing appreciation of the efficacy of the approach adopted by him and his policies in wide variety on fields. The historical significance of his contribution is only now being adequately understood. The relevance of Constitutional and political method devised in his period, is being increasingly realized as time passes. The perceptible trends towards Parliamentary Democracy, peaceful co-existence and humanism in the world, reflect the accuracy with which Nehru gauged and applied certain values resurgent not just in India but in all human kind.

It is no wonder that Rabindranath Tagore said about Nehru: "Though all details, there runs a deep current of humanity which overpasses a tangle of facts and leads us to the person who is greater than this deeds."

Nehru is now part of the folklore of India with a position second only to Mahatma Gandhi. The two great personalities appear to have been precursors of a higher human civilization still in the making. In the final analysis, Nehru's internal impact on India, and, if I may say, so on the world, may be understood accordingly.

## G.K. REDDY

Gunapati Keshavaram Reddy—G.K. for most of us would have been sixty-five today. The institution of an award in his name, to be presented on his birth anniversary, is, in my view, an appropriate way of signifying our affection for him and our high appreciation of his positive contribution as a journalist and a patriot.

G. K. Reddy was an accomplished and intrepid journalist. He had all the equipment necessary for his sensitive calling a razor sharp mind, enormous capacity for work, the ability to view things in proper perspective, to analyse and evaluate with objectively and to write with telling clarity and style. Over the years, his long experience with men and situations, perceptive understanding of unfolding events in the national and international planes, and evident commitment to certain values became his prominent features. He rose to a position of acknowledged continuance in highly competitive field of journalism.

When he chose to write on any subject the facts relevant to that subject formed the basis for his writing. He was careful with facts. He would not spare himself the labour of sifting and culling facts from the date before him. Columns with G.K. Reddy's by-line were therefore built with hard factual material and stood as solid and authentic news. He thus supplied the type of material input which an individual looks for when he prefers to read a newspaper rather than a novel.

G. K. Reddy was faithful to his profession, not a creative artist: as one whose principal assets comprised facts and prowess to make in for me comment, not the power of imagination and a flair for inducing excitement. This fidelity to his profession and integrity of mind account to a major extent for the high respect he was held in and will continue to be held in Equality. It is this, in my view, that accounts were read, over the years, by discerning people in India and outside.

It would be the task of a biographer to examine what it was that influenced such an approach in him. Perhaps it was his

From speech at the G. K. Reddy Memorial Award function at Nehru Auditorium, Teen Murti, New Delhi on 8 September 1988.

awareness and appreciation of the awesome power of the printed word specially in our country. After all, Mahatma Gandhi himself a great editor had said in *My Picture of Free India:* "The newspapers have taken the place of the Gita, the Bible and the Quran with the people. For them the printed sheet is gospel truth. This fact throws a great responsibility on the editors and newswriters..." And in the *Harijan* of 18 February 1939, Bapu had said: "Newspapers which indulge in untruth or exaggeration harm the cause they profess to espouse." A sensitive mind like G. K. Reddy's would have grasped the vast moral force in these words of the Father of the Nation. It is significant that Bapu had said this when he was leading the struggle against imperial might. Even in that period, Mahatma Gandhi, as an editor, did not desire his serupulous adherence to truth. He did stoop to conquer, nor did he encourage others to do so. Instead, he openly counselled rectitude.

The glory in the history of the press in India, during long decades of painful struggle and sacrifice in the cause of freedom, arises from the truthfulness, as much as the fearlessness of its voice against the foreign oppressor: from the eschewing of falsehood as much as the stringency and stridency of patriotic criticism against imperialist authority.

In all probability, men like G. K. Reddy had realized that only such an approach could have enabled the press in India, during the freedom struggle, to be so effective in the nationalist cause. Credibility is developed over time and a newspaper can do much more to inform and influence the public mind at it has a reputation for authenticity.

A happy feature of journalism in India even day is the high level of profesionalism displayed by newspaper editors and commentator and correspondents.

Concurrently however, a tell tale streak of dubious hue comes to the eye: you sadly are required to sulffer it and wait till the truth inevitably, is out and rases the stain. It is appropriate that these exceptional instances are disregarded by the test of the press particularly as they arise in the odd journal known for such manner. The press in Indian needs to be safeguarded, but perhaps, most of all from a few deviant elements of itself.

## P. SUBBARAYAN

Dr. Subbarayan by dint of his own ability and determination came into the mainstream of the political life of India.

In the early part of the century there was hardly anyone in the country who was not influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, young Subbarayan was, therefore, naturally attracted towards the philosophy and works of Gandhiji. The interest shown by him in the philosophy of Gandhiji led him to join the Indian National Congress. He also held Shri Rajagopalachari in high esteem and worked closely with him in implementing the constructive programmes of Gandhiji.

Dr. Subbarayan had deep regard for parliamentary institutions. He had a long stint as legislator and administrator. He served the State of Madras in various capacities before Independence.

After Independence he was associated with the Constitution framing process as member of the constituent Assembly. He served as Ambassador in Indonesia. He was also a member of the Rajya Sabha and then the Lok Sabha. He served as Minister in the Union Cabinet and later became the Governor of Maharashtra.

Dr. Subbarayan expressed himself against irrational and unscienfitic social beliefs. He wanted to revamp our social institutions. He laid stress on removing the numerous limitations on social progress such as obscurantist religious traditions and inhibiting social customs. His was the view of a universal humanist. Dr. Subbarayan was a staunch supporter of temple entry by the weaker sections and was President of the Tamil Nadu Harijan Sevak Sangh. His faith in the equality of man naturally led him to oppose the invidious caste system. The caste system, Dr. Subbarayan believed, was a direct violation of the humanist way of life. He once observed, "A social system that tolerates innumerable castes can never produce the unified people organised for the working of democracy."

---

Address at the unveiling of the potrait of Dr.P. Subbarayan in the Central Hall of Parliament. New Delhi on 16 October 1989.

Dr. Subbarayan wanted to introduce changes in the social order but for doing so he relied on the constitutional approach for initiating social change.

As President of the Madras Olympic Association and Madras Hockey Association he worked for popularising sports among youth. Team spirit and the spirit of tolerance and a sense of discipline were values which Dr. Subbarayan strove to promote. Dr. Subbarayan was a keen sportsman himself and contributed numerous articles on sports, particularly on cricket.

Dr. Subbarayan was a key figure from the State of Madras who played a prominent role in the national political movement before and after Independence. He was an ardent patriot, an able administrator and a prominent social reformer who worked for propagating the ideology of Mahatma Gandhi. His contributions deserve to be remembered.

# 3

# Contemporary Politics

Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma had played a key role as Congress President. During his tenure as President of the India National Congress, he tried to bring in inner party democracy. Besides this, he encouraged the youth to take active part in nation building. Due to this amiable behaviour, he was successful in bringing unity in the warring factions of the Congress Party. The media had rightly highlighted the important role Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma played in the organisational politics of India. The reactions of the press of India have been reviewed in the following pages.

### MRS. GANDHI'S AIDES TAKING FRESH LOOK AT TIES WITH CPI[1]

The Prime Minister's political advisers are taking fresh look at the Congress-CPI relationship before coming to any definite conclusion about the form in which the ruling party should seek communist support for estabilising its governments in U. P. and Orissa against the background of their growing friction in some of the other States.

Though there is no immediate need for an overt understanding with the CPI in U. P. where with its wafer thin majority the Congress is entitled to form a Government. The party has to rely on communist backing in Orissa even for being called upon to assume office.

In asessing the likely consequences of such an overt or covert alliance with the CPI, the Congress has to make up its mind first whether it would like to sustain itself in power in U. P. and Orissa with communist support or it would prefer to stabilise its position by wooing the Independents and encouraging defections from the

opposition. If it tries to be too clever by attempting both at the same time, there is every danger of the party getting bogged down once again the morass on Congress factionalism.

**CPI May Insist on ADMK Rule in Pondy**

The Communists are not going to back the Congress Governments in U. P. and Orissa without extracting a suitable price for it. The CPI will certainly insist that the Congress should at least let the ADMK rule Pondicherry in return. It sees no contradiction in pursuing a policy of "constructive co-operation" with the Congress in Kerala and extending "critical support to the ruling party in U. P. and Orissa, while opposing "reactionary Congress rule" in West Bengal lending "moral support" to the mass agitation in Gujarat and sympathising with the mounting worth of the people against the "Congress misrule" in Maharashtra.

The CPI adhering to this policy of qualified co-operation with the ruling party wherever possible with the avowed object of establishing closer links between the left forces inside and outside the Congress for isolating the reactionary elements in power and broadening the base for Indian socialism. The communist theorists see no harm in diluting the doctrine here and there in pursuit of these larger objectives, even if the dual tactics of criticising and co-operating with the Congress lands the CPI in politically embarrassing situations by exposing it to the charge of opportunism.

**New Regional Accent**

Some of the Congress radicals who are in favour of adverse formal relationship with the CPI feel that the real threat to the ruling party in the coming years will be posed not so much by the so-called national parties in opposition as the regional parties which are digging in their toes in the States. The victories of the ADMK in Pondicherry and Coimbatore, the impressive performance of the BKD in U.P., the tough fight put up by the Pragati party in Orissa, the triumph of the UDF in Nagaland and the success of the MPPMHU combination in Manipur is seem as part of this new regional accent in the politics of States.

These radicals feel that the Congress should try to operate both at the Central and State levels with a certain degree of flexibility without too much centralisation of the processes of policy making and administrative direction. They are no longer subscribing to the old-fashioned theory that only a strong national party like the Congress can provide stable Governments both at the Centre and in the States in the larger national interest. They see to harm at all now in having a strong Congress run Centre and stable State Governments headed by regional parties with a proper mass base, which enable the left parties like CPI to maintain a certain amount of flexibility in co-operating with Congress at the Centre and extending similar support to regional parties like the ADMK in the States.

It is in this new context that the CPI and its associates in the Congress have now started decrying the southern experiment of a progressive merger of the two Congress parties in Tamil Nadu since it comes in the way of their concept of communist backed regionalisation of the power structure in the States. An insidious campaign is going on in Delhi against the Kamaraj strategy of by-passing the ADMK and CPI in his crusade against he DMK, which in their view has brought the ruling Congress only humiliation both in Pondicherry and Coimbatore.

The Chief Minister of U. P. Mr. H.N. Bhauguna, who is a hard headed realist and an old-time Congressman, has no patience for such evacuations. He is totally opposed to the idea of an open alliance or working arrangement with the CPI because he is quite confident that he would be able to give the State a reasonably good government even with his slender majority. But Mrs. Nandini Satpathy is in favour of some sort of programme-based understanding with the CPI of stabilising her position in Orissa and the Congress High Command has to make up its mind after taking all these factors into consideration.

**Congress Wings Assembly Seat**

Mrs. Mira Rani Mitra (Congress) was to-day declared elected to the West Bengal Assembly from Gaighata constituency, defeating

her nearest rival Mr. Radhapada Biswas (Ind.). by a margin of 16, 483 votes in a four cornered contest.

The seat fell vacant with the murder of Mrs. Mira Rani's husband Mr. Chandrad Mitra, in December last.

## CONGRESS AND THE CPI[2]

Mr. Jagjivan Ram's outspoken warning against the designs of communist "infiltrators" in the Congress is not the only indication that Congress leaders are becoming increasingly disenchanted with their party's alliance with the CPI. Three Congress members of Parliament have in a joint statement drawn attention to the tactical line adopted by the CPI at its tenth congress at Vijayawada and said that in view of this their party's relations with the CPI need to be reviewed. The CPI calls itself a friend and ally of the Congress but makes no secret of its aim to wreck its unity and strength. It wants to use the alliance to strengthen itself at the cost of the Congress.

Mr. Dange visulises Kerala-type coalition governments everywhere, including at the Centre. He said that though a Kerala-type coalition at the Centre was desirable, the time for it had not yet come. What he clearly meant was that the "Progressives" in the Congress had yet to gain sufficient strength to be able to drive the rightists out. The CPI has classified Congressmen as lefists, centrists and rightist and feels that its alliance with the Congress in helping the process to polarisation in the ruling party to the advantage of the left-wrting.

The CPI's aims are set out unmistakably in a draft report reappeared for adoption by the tenth congress. The part of the report dealing with the developments in West Bengal that led to the collapse of the Progressive Democratic Alliance formed by the Congress and the CPI during the 1972 elections in that State, says that though PDA had to be wound up the CPI during the 1972 elections in that State, says that though PDA had to be wound up the CPI during the 1972 elections in that State, says that though PDA had to be wound up the CPI has continued to maintain its contacts with the let and democratic forces inside the Congress. This, it goes on to say, has "brought us closer to them and to the masses behind the Congress" and also shaken "the Congress leadership at the

national level". The report, which denounces one-party Congress leadership at the national level". The report, which denounces one-party Congress rule in West Bengal, recommends a left alternative which will include "the left and democratic forces in the Congress".

That is the pattern which the CPI wants for all the States as well as for the Centre. Needless to say,such a set-up will be a stepping stone to full seizure of power by the Communists. Congressmen have begun to see through the double game that the CPI is playing. While condemning M. Jayaprakash Narayan's movement the CPI is playing. while condemning Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan's movement the CPI is also at the same time, as the three MPs point out, trying to destroy the foundations of the Congress party.

## THE BUREAUCRACY AGAIN[3]

Many strange suggestions have lately been made about what needs to be done to improve administrative performance. But none is perhaps so bizare as the one made by Mr V.P. Sathe at a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party last week. Like many others in the Congress Party, Mr Sathe apparently thinks that the bureaucracy is responsible for all that his gone wrong with economy and he wants senior posts in the administration to be manned by party members. For a time the party wanted the bureaucracy to be "committed", Mr Sathe wants it replaced by the party faithful. In effect this would mean that party members themselves would constitute the bureaucracy so long as the party is in power, which every ruling party hopes will be for ever. The idea make the concept of commitment appear almost conservative. But Mr Sathe does not seem to think altogether novel. He cite's the example of the Soviet Union, where administrative functions are performed by party cadres, and of the United States, where the party in power suits its men in key positions. Without gong into the merits of the American practice, it may be pointed out that there is a clear division in the USA between the areas of the permanent civil service and of officials drifted by a particular Administration. Mr Sathe apparently wants to deny the regular civil service its traditional role. The Soviet example is perhaps more relevant to his argument, but only if he is reconciled to the prospect of one-party rule for all may upset his

calculations. Is he also prepared for the confusion that would then follow?

Mr Sathe's suggestion would have been pernicious if it had any chance of being seriously considered by those who matter in the Government and the party. It is perhaps still possible to hope that no one in authority will give it a thought: something has possibly been learnt since the cry for commitment was first raised. Nevertheless, the routine criticism of the bureaucracy at the recent CPP meeting suggests that the party has not learnt enough, or is still disinclined to acknowledge what it has leant. The bureaucracy has a great deal to answer for: but the fashion of blaming it even for the manifest failures at higher policy-making levels has become altogether tiresome. It needs also to be asked what the bureaucracy means. In current jargon it seems to consist of only the senior civil servants, possibly restricted to the ICS and the IAS, leading out the vast administrative apparatus filled by middle-grade and junior officials. Mr Sathe wants only senior administrative posts for party members Presumbly he either thinks that party men would not be interested in anything but the best or is satisfied with the performance of all Government officials below the top. Surely he knows that those at the top have less freedom to deviate from what is laid down by their political masters than do the incomparably larger number of people directly engaged in the execution of official policies and programmes. But it is perhaps considered more progressive to say that senior bureaucrats are not and will never be, committed than they point out that junior employees in the field or in their offices are falling down on their jobs.

## INDIRA GANDHI MUST BUILD BRIDGES WITH THE OPPOSITION[4]

As each election gets costlier, dirtier and more banal, it leaves behind an embittered opposition and a tattered political system. If the ruling party in its arrogance and dizziness with money and power does not stop flouting democratic norms and conventions, it may well, in the process of acquiring enough votes for getting electoral majority, push three times more people into a cauldron of bloody violence.

If the Congress has managed to retain power for over 25 years, it was due less to its performance than to the peculiar and complex government-opposition relationships that Shri Nehru so assiduously built.

**Nehru's method**

In many subtle ways, Shri Nehru was his own opposition leader. This role helped him to establish and legitimize Congress party's dominance and create national consensus on numerous domestic and foreign policy issues. It was quite remarkable that this pattern which was full of paradoxes came to be accepted as consistent with the theory and practice of democratic opposition. One-party dominance, which, by definition, impelled the absence of an alternative to the ruling party, totally overshadowed alternative programmes or ideologies as normally go with a multi-party system.

This characteristic pattern of inter-relationship among the elements of a novel political party structure could remain stable only if its mechanism was not subject to big swings of pendulum and its internal contradictions we kept away from exploding. Besides it was well understood that this novel but unequal government-opposition relations marked transitional phase, so much more needed for a political take-off.

Its life span depended upon the ruling party's strict adherence to norms, procedures and self-discipline, and its capacity to manage its conflicts so that the take-off was not stunted or blocked. No one expected it to be a transition of uncertain duration and character, as it turned out to be. It was certainly not designed to perpetuate in power a political oligarchy or a specific set of rulers. Shri Nehru and his colleagues were considerably conscious of the responsibility that fell on them.

But the national consensus broke down on the question of Sino-Indian relations and so did the government-opposition syndrome. The opposition parties assumed the dangerous and self defeating role of total opposition so much so that Shri Nehru's leadership was crippled in the last phase of his life.

There is ample evidence to prove that the ruling party on its part come to depend upon making large breaches in the institutional and legal norms to suit its sectional interests. A ruling party generally has the advantage of the state power on its side but at the same time it is of almost importance that it should not cross the legitimate limits of the use of that power particularly if the ruling party is a dominant party.

**Two tactics**

Except for a brief period of 1969-71 when Shrimai Gnadhi, faced by a spilt in her party, had to enter into an alliance or understanding with some opposition parties to maintain majority in Parliament, the Congress opposition relations have been fast deteriorating. Apart from the CPI, there is no party which does not accuse the Congress and its leadership of being guilty of using every conceivable means to remain in power, including the splitting of opposition, both vertically and horizontally.

During the recent States elections Shrimati Gandhi adopted two tactics neither of which was necessary and both of which will prove costly in the long run. First, she ignored the vital distinction of her position as the Federal Prime Minister and her role as the leader of one particular political party. She tried to create the impression that national political stability would be threatened if the opposition was voted into power. Indeed, the crossed the critical limit, which she had no reason to do, and accused the opposition of being fascist, anti-national, anti-people and what not. In effect she defeaed the very purpose of that costly exercise undertaken in 1971 when election to Parliament were separated from States elections on the plea that local issues must be kept distinct from national issues.

Second, in a scrambling hurry, she said all kinds of things, including that the sole object of the opposition was to throw her out of power. In effect to the poor, credulous voters she made the hole thing sound like a conspiracy. In this way, not merely did she inject national issues into local politics, but revealed her own weakness by resorting to this unspecified and unfair attack on the opposition. After all, it is a function of the opposition to defeat the ruling party

and thereby also remove its leader from power. The Congress party has left no choice for the opposition but to get out of the constitutional processes and seek their revenge through other methods. After all, violence is nothing politics carried on by other means.

## Challenge

Shrimati Gandhi has also been throwing hints about dark international and national forces ganging up against the nation. Dr. S. D. Sharma sometime ago engaged himself in that kind of exercise and had to be stopped by Shrimati Gandhi herself as the relations between the Government and the opposition reached a breaking point. Such remarks are more galling to the opposition than anything else and may create conditions of civil war in time of serious crisis. Not that the opposition parties are innocent but foreign agents and lobbyists find it much more convenient to work under the Congress rather than opposition parties. Shrimati Ghandhi must clearly identify the forces she has referred to, or exhibit a greater sense of responsibility to the opposition.

The Congress party's relations with the opposition/have depended as much on intra-party relations as on inter-party relations. So long as the Congress has been able to maintain a balance of forces within itself. It has been both responsible to the opposition and responsible in its actions. The challenge to the Congress leadership has always come from within the party and seldom from outside and whatever pressures were exerted from outside with the result of pulls from the internal imbalances in the party.

## Response

In the 1967 elections, the Congress lost in nearly half the States but all this did not affect the balance of forces in the centre, if the balance was upset, it was because of the internal party squabbles. If from now on the impression gets going that the managers of the Congress party cannot be stopped by Shrimati Gandhi in violating the laws of the land and manipulating the state apparatus, it would ultimately result in a fierce confrontation between the centre and the

states whenever non-Congress parties are returned to power in some States.

However, it would be wrong to put the entire blame on the ruling party for the present deadlock between the Government and the opposition. Some of the opposition leaders have exhibited such antipathy to Shrimati Gandhi as to have destroyed their won credibility. They are prepared to condone their own mistakes and valuations of norms as an excuse for their incapacity to provide national alternative to the ruling party. This is certainly not a healthy situation. It is their duty that when Shrimati Gandhi seeks their cooperating in meeting the present national crisis, which is quite serious, they should at least lay down the conditions on which they are prepared to cooperate and not dismiss her call as propaganda.

But the responsibility of the ruling party is very heavy indeed. It is one thing to make use of political rhetorics during election times. It is quite another to continue avoidable conflicts when the nation is passing through a crisis and there is urgent need for all political parties and their leaders to arrive at some common understanding with each other. Shrimati Gandhi cannot have it both ways denounce the opposition and also ask for a more conciliatory posture from it.

Shrimati Gandhi may have had in the past a bad experience of having confabulations with the opposition leaders. For example, her dialogue with the opposition leaders about the Fifth Five-year Plan proved. But that is no reason why a new dialogue should not be started. The very method of having open round table discussion is not the best method to build bridges with the opposition. There are some opposition leaders with whom Shrimati Gandhi certainly cannot have any fruitful dialogue. The whole method has to be informal and has to go through several stages before a climate of a confidence is created.

If the major opposition parties make the charge that the ruling party has rigged the election, the Government should immediately appoint a high-powered commission to go into those charges to establish facts. The Congress could not have gained many seats by rigging. It is in its own interest that it must establish its own legitimacy by stopping such practices if there are any because

otherwise it would push the opposition adopting extra constitutional political practices.

This is the precise moment to build bridges between the Government and the opposition, and Shrimati Gandhi alone can take the initialive. The crisis that the nation is facing brooks no delay in starting the dialogue.

## DANGER[5]

Except to CIA pundits, their henchmen who have to put on often silly and occasionally violent shows to earn their keep and the panderers of he kept press the Right is no worthwhile challenge to be evolving Indian democracy whose sights are set on socialism. It is true that unconvincing charades like those put up by Mr Jayapraksh Naraya and Choudhuri Charan Singh will go on because the older an unemployable politician grows the more numerous are the calls that frustration makes on him. The Right consisting mainly of such freaks is therefore of no particular mainly of such freaks is therefore of no particular danger to the Congress because the Right can never get near nor enthuse the people of India.

The danger to the Congress is in its own organizational and ideological tissues. Sloth and the unhealthy fat of office-derived opulence is clogging its blood vessels. Senility bred of continued mental laziness is threatening its mental process. These can no more be cured with windy resolutions. A.I. C. C. shows or even Working Committee meetings. That is so because the majority of those interested in them no more count with the people. Many of them provoke only irritation or contempt in the majority of people. This reaction to the Congress is extremely dangerous not because the Congress is some divine political incarnation that has to be protected at all cost. Gandhi long ago said that it could be a more useful institution if it could summon up sufficient courage to sacrifice its government ambitions. That, however, is neither here nor there, now. History cannot be made to flow back in spite of our national proclivity for every kind of revivalism.

The true danger is that unless the Congress is "revamped" (as one of the reactionary papers has described it in an annoyed head line) out of the debris it may soon become, will creep out many little

potential malcontents ready to accommodate themselves to hovering fascism, communalism and all the unhealthy political and social distempers in our national climate. Such a "revamping" should not merely mean one more routine "revamping" either of the Government or the so-called party high command. It should mean the dropping of quite a number of highly placed individuals who have outlived their political use and have become sources of corruption and decadence. It should mean as far as the Congress so a party is concerned, the opening of its doors without fear to youth, to non-sectarian radicalism and to communication with reservation with other political groups and parties as inspired by socialism and democracy as it could have been by now. Casting away old habits is not easy: but the Congress has had a very easy lie too long.

## P. M.'S POONA VISIT AND AFTER[6]

The trumphant visit of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi to Poona has succeeded to a great extent in restoring the confidence of the Congress leaders to face the challenge of the opposition parties and also in Boston the image of the top leaders in the organisation. The opposition parties particularly the SSP and the Jan Sangh, taking essential commodities and the difficulties of the middle classes, have been building themselves up before the public. They were able to muster public opinion to their cause and not a day passed either in Poona or in Greater Bombay without demonstrations or gheraos.

The events in Gujarat and Bihar emboldened the Opposition leaders to step on their agitation and when they came to know that the Prime Minister would be visiting Poona in connection with the silver jublee celebrations of Poona University, they went to the extent of announcing that they would bar her entry into the city. Their main charge was that the administration had failed to give 12 kgs. of foodgrains to every individual in the State.

### Opposition Tacties

The published intention of the Opposition leaders to bar the Prime Minister's entry angered even those people who were unhappy with the performance of the Congress in the State. They

saw in the tactics of the opposition parties the emergence of dictatorial ideolgoies and felt it was an undemoratic act to prevent the Prime Minister from participating in the silver jublee celebrations of university. Mr. S.M. Joshi, the socialist leader who hails from Poona, disaproved of the stand of the opposition parties and announce that the Prime Minister had every right to take part in the celebration. The announcement of Mr. Joshi and other prominent educationists who were keen to preserve the fair name of this historic city was of some help to the State Congress leaders.

Mr. Vasant Dada Patil, the strong man of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee and Deputy Leader of the party in the Assembly, declared that the Opposition parties and other anti-social elements would not be allowed to repeat their performances at Nagpur, where the Prime Minister had to abandon her public meeting because of their actions. In his determined bid to shield the reputation of the city, he got able assistance from Mr. Sharad Pawar, Minister of State for Home Affairs and an upcoming leader in the State. These two leaders camped for more than ten days in Poona and saw to it that the Prime Minister's visit went off as scheduled without any hitch.

**Well-attended Meeting**

Apart from the general public, Congress workers came from every nook and corner of the district to make the public meeting of the Prime Minister a memorable and well-attended one. Mr. V.P. Naik, the Chief Minister, also played his role in seeing to it that the opposition leaders did not catch him on the wrong foot as in Nagpur. He visited Poona frequently despite his engagements connected with the budget session of the State Assembly and met the leaders who made much noise and sound about the visit of the Prime Minister. Mr. Nalk, known for his tactics and pragmatic approach, made a dent in the Opposition ranks.

A day before the arrival of Mrs. Gandhi, it was clear that the opposition parties would not succeed in their "grand dharna" programme. Mr. Naik, Mr. Vasant Dada Patil and other Congress leaders showed no signs of anxiety or concern. They were happy that they were able to resurrect the image of the party among the masses

and were confident that Poona would extend a big welcome to Mrs. Gandhi.

It was actually difficult to contact the Opposition leaders on that day. A few of went underground when they realised that their plan would not come off. Their friends mustered in strength at one point on the route of the Prime Minister so that their demonstration could trigger a law and order problem. Their call to observe a "City bandh" fell on dead ears. This irritated a few aggressive members of the Opposition who, helped by some anti-social elements, gave vent to their spleen by looting a few shops and indulging in arson. The trouble was however, nipped in the bud.

In the evening, at the public meeting, Mrs. Gandhi moved by the mammoth gathering present, lashed out at the Opposition. She complimented the citizens of Poona on their behaviour and asked them to meet the challenge of the opposition parties in the same determined way. Mr. Naik and his senior colleagues were so overwhelmed by the success of the pubic meeting that they cancelled then plan for immediate departure for Bombay and celebrated it at the Circuit House by distributing sweets and soft drinks to visitors.

**P.M.'s Advice to Younger Members**

The immediate outcome of Mrs. Gandhi's visit is the heart-searching done by the Congress workers in the State. They realised that though the MPCC was a well-oiled machine and its grassroots at the village level were strong and firm, their image in the towns and urban areas was no quite impressive. The top leaders of the organisation also decided to bury the hatchet in the interests of the party and revitalise it. The simmering differences in the Legislature Congress Party over Mr. Naik's leadership, which surfaced a week before the Prime Minister's visit have now receded into the back ground. In understand reliably that the Prime Minister had advised the younger members of the party not to raise the leadership question now. Here also Mr. Vasant Dada played his role effectively. At a crucial meeting of legislators, Mr. Patil exhorted the younger members to sink their differences and work under Mr. Naik's leadership. Mr. Patil was also successful in persuading Mr. Sharad

Pawar, Mr. Prabakar Kunte and other leaders to give another chance to Mr. Naik.

It now looks as if Mr. Naik will expand his Ministry from the present 21 members (including Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers) to 29 or 30. He is expected to give representation to unrepresented regions like Konkan, Kolhapur and Nagar. He may also upgrade a few Ministers. Mr. Sharad Pawar is likely to get Cabinet rank. The chances of Mr. D. T. Rupvate nd Mr. S. R. Solanki look bright. Some of the Ministers who are carrying more than two portfolios would be relieved of their burden and one of the portfolios given to new entrants. Even the officials in Sachivalava complain that files do not move quickly because of the Ministers being saddled with heavy responsibilities

Although Mr. Naik's critics are lying low in the wake of the Prime Ministers visit he should bestir himself and concentrate on the immediate problems of the State. There is a growing feeling that he is not showing the same zest and determination he displayed when he tackled the situation following scarcity conditions last year. And because of his lethargic attitude on the food front the procurement programme has proved a flop. His recent support of Mr. N. K. Tirpude a former Minister in his Cabinet for being nominated to the State Council and the rejection of the latter's candidature by the High Command had raised fresh hopes n those who are demanding change in the leadership of the party. It is reported Mr. Tripude is now trying to get the support of the Dalit Panthers. This is a new development in the State politics and it will have repressions, probably unpleasant to Mr. Naik.

**War of Succession Likely**

Mr. Naik's open support of Mr. M. D. Chaudhari, Finance Minister, and the latter's nomination to the committee appointed by the legislature party to go into some of the problems of the party, give strength to the suggestion that Mr. Naik is grooming him as his successor with a view to forestalling the demand that a Maratha be appointed Chief Minister. It cannot be ruled out that there will be a war of succession for the Chief Ministership and dissidents may raise the banner of revolt after the Presidential election in August,

many in the organisation believe that what obtains today is a temporary peace forced by Mrs. Gandhi and accepted by Mr. Patil and that it cannot last long.

### MEASURES TO TONE UP CONGRESS DISCUSSED[7]

Measures to tone up the Congress organisation so that it can face up to the challenge hurled by various opposition parties were considered here today at a 90-minute meeting of Working Committee members present in the Capital.

The Congress President. Mr S. D. Sharma presided over the meeting.

The consensus was that the initiative should not be allowed to pass either to the lefists parties that have combined themselves of luncheon demonstrations and bandhs or "the rightist parties" which were again making a bid to review the "grand alliance".

It was felt that current economic situation marked by critical shortages rising prices and corruption at various levels should be pondered over by the party itself seriously instead of relying solely on governmental action. party worker at various levels shuold be galvanished to render effective help to the people of tiding over the present difficulties. Only thus. the party's image could be refurbished. it was thought.

The informal discussions will be resumed after three or four days and completed before the next meeting of the Working Committee.

The Prime Minister hereself is reportedly anxious that the current situation in the country, having grave economic and political portents, should be discussed by some members of the CWCI formally. If their ideas could get crystallised before the CWC met. It would help in making the deliberations at the CWC more fruitful and purposive. it is for this reason that the members. who gathered today. are to continue their discussions next week.

On current indications. the CWC may be called towards the end of the month and the AICC, after Parliament adjourns in the second week of May. in Delhi.

## THE CLEANISING OPERATION[8]

The Congress Party is currently engaged in about of introspection and self-criticism. Such exercises are all to the good if the night morals are drawn at the end of it all. On more that one recent occasion, the Prime Minister has felt the need to warn against the apparels of factionalism and to express determination to handle indiscipline with firmness. At the executive committee meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party the leadership was resportedly rapped for failure to revamp the organisation, Party President Shankar Dayal Shama countered with a broadside against the craze for ministerial posts which, according to him, had led to the devaluation of party offices. There are plans to screen members at various levels and talks of a purge are in the air. Such increasing preoccupation with the party's internal health is a natural corollary to the various rifts, particularly in the States, between the organisational ministerial wings. Dissidence of this nature has been a rising phenomenon, most recently in Bihar, Maharashtra and Punjab and to a lesser degree in Madhya Pradesh and Bengal. The fact that the Prime Minister herself has been meeting diverse dissident factions is a measure of the malaise and of the concern of the leadership.

It is not difficult to sympathies with Dr. S. D. Sharma's predicament over revamping the PCCs and DCCs. Apart from the "devaluation" he deplores, a prime difficulty is the long-distance control of State and even district party affairs by Central leaders whose strength, in many cases is based on the spheres of influence they have carved to for themselves in their home bases. It is no secret that his state of affairs had often led to concerted campaigns by section of this party against PCC chiefs and even against chief ministers resulting in ultimate disillusionment and lack of credibility among the public. It also engenders corruption, nepotism and manoeuvrings to an extent wheel a massive legislative majority no longer ensures political stability. Nor has the image of the party been improved by the many voices with which it seems to speak: At a time when Mr Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed a busily defending the new wheat policy, AICC secretary Chandrajit Yadav publicly denounces the decision.

A purge of the party, in the present juncture is more easily recommended than brought about since the extent of dissidence in many States is so large that the pronoun operation may well have to assume the proportions of a full-fledged amputation. In Maharashtra, for instance the Chief Minister was forced to call a legislature party meeting in response to a memorandum signed by 136 members and the dissidents held out the threat that if the government did not improve its performance, they will have to consider if they could remain in the party". The basic weakness of the Congress, as Mrs Gandhi unerringly pointed out, is its progressively widening alienation from the masss. Tinkering with the superstructure by way of ad hoc committees, reshufles and changes of leadership is not likely to help long as the grassroots are not strengthened by taking the party back to the people.

## CONGRESSMEN WARNED OF FRESH ELECTIONS[9]

### PM not to tolerate indiscipline

The Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, today warned her party coleagues that elections would be held again if they created conditions of instability in Orissa.

Addressing meeting of Congress legislators before her hectic tour of the State, Mrs Gandhi said: "Fresh elections will be held not once but ten times of party men indulge in politics of defection as is evident from the recent Rajya Sabha poll in which five or six members violated the party whip." Political stability was of paramount importance and the Central leadership was determined to put an end to indiscipline in the party, Mrs Gandhi asserted.

Events in Gujarat had viction of indiscipline and that the time had come to put an end to it, she said.

Mrs Gandhi also said she did not personally believe in wide distinctions between one category of service and another. But there nad to be some kind of levels in the administrative structure and system, she added, UNI and ITI add.

She was commenting on the demands of West Bengal doctor and engineers for partly in pay and status with the IAS.

She advised her party men to be disciplined and loyal to the party and not to be misled by false slogans or fall a prey to political or other temptations or enticements.

Mrs Gandhi today ceremonially launched the State Government's programme for distribution of land to the landless by distributing "pattas" record of ownership rights to 15 landless harijan and adivasis at a function held at the Raj Bhavan here.

Addressing a meeting after laying the foundation stone of the Rs 250 crore Paradip fertiliser project earlier in the day, the Prime Minister warned the people of Orissa and elsewhere in the country against attempts by vested interests, some opposition parties and other to create chaos in the country by violence, strikes and harals.

These agitations against rising prices scarcity or corruption in the administration were only pleas to achieve their "nefarious designs" of destroying democracy, Mrs Gandhi said.

She said that the poor, the peasants and labourers did not join in these agitations. Only the well clad and well-fed did.

The country was now facing complicted problems. The Fifth Plan was being launched today when prices were rising all over the world. and the rise in the prices of crude oil had been eating into the proposed resources. she said.

An attempt to further aggravate the situation by violence and strikes would affect production. both in the fields and factories. and supply of essential commodities.

This would also harm the interest of the people and "retard our pledges to ameliorate the conditions of the weaker sections of the society." she warned.

Thanking the Orissa people for having voted the Congress Party into power. Mrs Gandhi said she was happy over the verdict. She felt only the Congress could lead the country to prosperity and on the socialistic path.

The Paradip project would open a new chapter in the history development and progress of the State. Mrs Gandhi said.

Orissa was somewhat "economically backward" but it was culturally very rich. the Prime Minister said.

She assured the people that first priority in the employment in the new project would be given to those who had to lost their lands and homes for its achievement.

Local people would also get priority in the employment.

Mrs. Gandhi said skilled people, necessary for the execution of the project would also come from other States.

The Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Chemicals Mr. Shah Newaz Khan said when the fertillser project is completed about 70 lakh tonnes of more foodgrains would be produced.

The project was expected to be completed by the end of the Fifth Plan. France was giving aid for it.

The Chief Minister Mrs Nandini Satpathy, said the plant, one of the biggest in Asia, would provide direct employment to 2,000 people and indirect employment to 5,000 to 6,000.

**Railway strike move condemned**

Gandhi, today condemned the move for a general strike or a go-slow in the Railways from tommorrow.

Such a strike would affect the movement of coal, foodgrains and other essential commodities to different parts of the country, and hit hard the common people, she said.

Mrs Gandhi said the people who had been trying to engineer the Railway strike had been saying that the strike was intended to to get demands of the railwaymen conceded Government. These were only "pleas" to achieve their "nefarious design" to aggravate the difficulties in the country, as, she said, these people kept their demands so high that they knew none could fulfil them.

## SHARMA LASHES OUT AT CPI CRITICS OF CONGRESS[10]

New Delhi March, (PTI). The Congress President, Dr. S. D. Sharma, told newsmen here tonight that it was the prerogative of his party and its leader to decide what should be the composition of the Union Government.

He was commenting on the CPIs proposed campaign or a change in the composition of the Union Government as part of its struggle for a leftward shift in the country's policies.

For some years, he said, the CPI had been following the policy .of "critical support" towards the Congress. The Congress had always heard the Opposition with respect and it was free to make whatever suggestion it liked. But the formation of a Government was a different matter.

The CPI's new strategy to pursue its "leftward shift" objective has caused resentment among Congressmen, while those opposed to it feel the CPI was now attempting to run the Congress from within. those friendly to it fear the new strategy might only split the left forces inside the Congress.

The Congress party had been divided on the understanding its leader reached with the CPI for recent Assembly elections in UP, Orrisa and Manipur. The critics of the understanding have been of the view that it had only helped the CPI to strengthen itself at the cost of the Congress though they explain away their party's presence in the CPI-led coalition ministry in Kerala a special case.

These critics have become vociferous after the riots in Bihar where the CPI has been demanding the ouster of the Ghafoor Ministry for its failure to meet the situation caused by the riots last week.

Some of the Bihar Congressmen have urged the leadership to review the party relation with the CPI in Bihar and other States.

Such a review might be undertaken by the leadership when the Working Committee meets here early in April.

## CONGRESS VERSUS CONGRESS[11]

There is an ominous rumbling in Madhya Pradesh with student riots as far apart as Indore and Raipur as the crisis within the ruling party seems to be moving towards a climax. The open exahbition of Congress disunity even as dark apprehension are voiced about evil designs in certain quarters to start Gujarat and Bihar type agitations in other States, is more than little curious. When Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma expressed fears recently of such agitation, he was reported

specifically to have referred to Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, among others. And yet it is in these two States that Congress instability is manifestly growing because of factional wrangles and mud-slinging. Mr. P. C. Sethi has been a constant visitor to Delhi of late. On one account he wished to be relieved of Chief Ministership. The other view is that he is seeking Central dissidents in Madhya Pradesh are again crystallising under the leadership of Mr Shyama Charan Shukla whose campaign to oust Mr Sethi is said to have the blessings of Mr D. P. Mishra. Some dissidents led by Mr Gautam Sharma, a former Food Minister in the Mishra. Ministry last week met the Congress President. They argued for Mr Sethi's removal from office on the ground that he was unable to cope with the food and law and order problems. The Congress President advised the dissidents to view development in the wider context of what is happening in other States and to be patient: and he advised Mr Sethi "to be vigilant and to do everything in the interest of the party." All of which leaves everything in suspense to the distriment both of good and firm administration.

In Maharashtra, storm signals have appeared following the Central Congress Election Board's rejection of Mr V. P. Naik's candidate, Mr N. K. Tirpude, for the State Legislative Council. Mr. Naik expects the challenge to his leadership to come primarily from Mr Vasantrao Patil, who represents the West Maharashtra group and Mr Shankar Rao Chavan, representing Marathwada. The two are said to have opposed Mr Tirpude's nomination and made it an issue of party unity Disenchantment with Mr Naik's government is also being increasingly heard in some vocal sections of the BPCC, which have found an issue for legitimate whipping the proposed "trade centre" on land to be reclaimed from the sea at the southern and of Bombay which would be a town planning disaster. The Congress High Command would be well advised to take note of the sign and meet the coming crises in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra before they erupt. The need urgently is for definition and decisiveness.

## CONGRESS CMs TO DEVISE STRATEGY[12]

A conference of Congress Chief Minister is proposed to be called here soon to discuss measures to counter the challenge of right reaction in different parts of the country. The conference will discuss

the "new technique" of certain parties of trying to create conditions of lawlessness after their failure to win the people's confidence at the polls.

According to Congress sources here the idea is to combine political action with stern administrative measures to meet the challenge. The Chief Ministers are likely to confer after the Congress Working Committee has discussed the political and law and order situation in the country at its meeting next month.

A meeting of the AICC will also be held in Delhi to review the political and economic situation and re-define the partymen's role in the present juncture.

It is in this background that the Congress leadership will review the organisational situation in the States. The emphasis will be on party men to close the ranks and forging unity in the face of the onslaught of the right and left extremists.

The Congress leadership disfavours bringing changes in the political setup of any state in a hurry. such changes will depend on the possible impact that they will have on the political stability in a given state. It is felt that the need of the hour is to step up organisational activity in different states to meet the opposition's threat.

The Congress general secretary. Mr Chandrajit Yada, today denied having suggested to the party leadership that Mr Abdul Ghafoor should resign from Chief ministership.

## GOVT 'FAILED' TO PROTECT CITIZENS[13]

The AICC General Secretary. Mr Chandrajit Yadav, has confirmed that the Bihar Government had completely failed to provide protection to the public against loot and arsons by organised groups on March 18, Mr Yadav returned here from Patna today after making a first hand study of the situation. He maintained that the Government should have been more vigilant and taken necessary steps to give protection to the Patna citizens.

He told newsmen that the Jan Sangh, RSS, SSP, and the Ananda Marga were responsible for the violent disturbances in Patna city and other towns.

During his stay he had met many student leader who had assured him that they would continue their movement in a peaceful manner until their demands were met. They were prepared to negotiate with the State Government on their demands Mr Yadav said he had advised the Chief Minister, Mr Ghafoor, to meet student leaders and discuss their demands with them.

Meanwhile the political situation in the country with particular reference to Bihar was today discussed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with some of the opposition parties were completely frustrated after their failure to capture power in Uttar Pradesh and Orissa, they could be expected to give expression to their anger through violent means. It was, therefore, necessary to maintain an all-round vigil to prevent a serious threat to law and order.

Mr. Abdual Ghafoor has been assured of the full backing by the Centre in his efforts to maintain law and order in the State in view of the proposed bandh tommorrow.

## CONGRESS GROUPS TO CO-OPERATE[14]

The co-operation between the Old Congress and the Congress in Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu will not only continue but will be strengthened through common programmes.

This became clear after the rounds of talks which Mr Kamaraj has had with the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and Mr Morarji Desai here yesterday.

Mr Morarji will leave for Madras on Saturday and will return here for the meeting of the Old Congress Working Committee next month.

As far as Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry are concerned. Mr Kamaraj will be the one-man liaison body-since Mrs Gandhi has referred to him two crucial issues. One was the question of supporting an independent candidate in the biennial election to the Rajya Sabha from Tamil Nadu. The other was the support sought by the ADMK Ministry in Pondicherry. In respect of both issues Mrs Gandhi has referred the ADMK to Mr Kamaraj.

In what form of co-operation will be strengthened would be decided. The first step may be joint public meetings. The two parties

might decide to agitate on chosen issues. It is conceded that some time would be needed for a total rapport to develop between the workers of both orgnisations.

It is understood that the talks between Mr Desai were cordial. There was no response to the Pondicherry or Uttar Pradesh elections. It is gathered that Mr Kamaraj explained his compulsions in Tamil Nadu.

He is as much opposed to the DMK and ADMK as to the CPI and its shifting strategies. His concern is that his State, which has been solidly behind Congress should not be permanently lost to the party. In other words, he does not want atomisation of politics which would benefit the CPI and lead to a Kerala type situation.

On the national plane Mr Kamaraj is understood to have underscored the importance of preventing chaos overtaking the country. While he concedes that the shortcomings of the Government might be the catalyst for the explosion he is confident that the role could be stemmed if there is co-operation by canvassing others. He has only broadly exchanged views. At no stage had he talked of a merger.

Since by the time the Working Committee meets that heat generated by the recent election would have died down and the ideas now thrown about would have been discussed in more State. It is expected that there would be a greater apperciaion of line taken by Mr. Mamaraj.

## PM WANTS JOINT ALL—PARTY EFFORT TO END LAWLESSNESS[15]

The Prime Minister. Mrs. Indira Gandhi. is exploring the possibilities of a joint effort by all the leading political parties to curb the growing meanace of violence in public life, which is passing the most serious threat to the country's democratic system since independence.

After the Bihar situation has been brought under control Mrs. Gandhi proposes to call a meeting of the party leader in Parliament for a frank discussion on how best they could co-operate in the larger national interest in dealing with this new danger to the very concept of Indian freedom.

The ruling Congress also has started doing some heart searching about its share of responsibility for setting in motion a disastrous chain reaction of events that is developing into a near anarchical situation. The scourage of factional fights and frequent defections—and the premium placed on political opportunism in the wake of the Congress split—has not only underminded public confidence in the Parliamentary process, but also provided the necessary provocation for lawlessness as a form of protest against economic mismanagement.

**Praise for Morarji**

There is considerable appreciation in high Congress circles here that, whatever his political differences with the Prime Minister, Mr Morarji Desai has lived up to his reputation in this hour of crisis and openly condemned this increasing resort to violence for ventilating public grievance against government's failures. He has opened the way for some sort of a constructive dialogue between the Government and the Opposition for evolving a bipartisan approach to problems to public welfare without letting party politics come in the way of this limited co-operation.

After Gujarat, it is Bihar's turn to face the full fury of mob violence. Apart from the paralysing impact of these self-inflicted wounds on the country's public life, the continued exploitation of mass passions for political purpose by interested elements has brought the whole party system in the ridicule. Even the ruling Congress has felt obliged to denounce, for example, the double standards of the CPI in retaining its alliance with the ruling party but exploiting each agitation for gaining some political advantage for itself even at the cost of causing serious embarrassment to the Government.

According to the reports reaching Delhi, the Socialist Party, the Jan Sangh and even the Anand Marg have participated in the senseless orgy of violence in Patna and other Bihar towns. But the CPI and the CPM have not been innocent bystanders while this tragedy was being enacted, nor have the Congress factional groups been entirely free from all blame. The parties of both the right and the left have been equally responsible each in varying measure. for what has happened in this unfortunate State.

Traditionally, Bihar has been one of the worst administered States—the richest in its mineral resources, but one of the poorest in the living standards of its people. It has had a succession of highly incompetent governments intersersed by frequent spells of President' rule. There have been 14 Chief Ministers in the State since independence, but none has left behind any lasting impression.

## CWC MEET LIKLY SOON ON POLITICAL SITUATION[16]

A meeting of the Congress Working Committee is likely to be summoned soon to discuss the political situation in the country, particularly in the context of the recent development in Gujarat and the latest outburst of violenc in Bihar.

The Working Committee, the Congress Party's top policy-making body, has not met for months and there is a feeling among Congress MPs that it should take stock of the situation. The date of the meeting will be fixed by this weekend.

The Centre is meanwhile, in constant touch with the Union Home Minister, Mr. Dikshit, who is studying the situation in Bihar from Patna. While violence in the State has spread to a number of towns of the Government is not taking an alarmist view.

The Working Committee will discus what is at the root of the widespread violence which Mrs Gandhi yesterday said while talking to newsmen, is acquiring the same pattern in different States.

Mrs Gandhi did not elaborate on what she said, but it is felt that she was refereeing to the manner in which the legislatures mainly were being made the target of the agitations and violence.

Several reason are being ascribed for violent activities in different states. One is the current economic situation, high prices and a climate of shortages.

The other is—and Congress circles lay considerable emphasis join this—that the opposition parties had laid heavy hopes on the recent Assembly elections.

Central leaders feel that having failed at the hustings, opposition groups were now taking to the politics of the street. And to achieve their aim they were making use of the students.

The Congress leaders do not hide the fact that both in Gujarat and Bihar the Congress organisation has been found to be extremely week and disunited. The Working Committee is bound to consider how to tone up the organisation when the Opposition challenge has become formidable. Mrs Gandhi has in her conversations with Congress MPs pointed out the shortcomings of the Congress as an organisation.

When Gujarat was in trouble most of the Congress MPs wee in Delhi and the State Congress leaders kept fighting among themselves. In Bihar too,the constant factional fights between the Ministerialists and the dissidents have brought down the prestige of the Congress.

## CHALLENCGE BEFORE THE CONGRESS[17]

The restraint with which the Central leadership has received the news of the Congress victory in the U. P. and Orissa elections is appropriate. For while the results of the elections have provided a breathing time to the Congress and restored some confidence in its ranks, it is no more than a breathing time. The situation that faces the country is by no means easy and unless the leadership takes fresh stock of the situation and starts in a way that is different from the drift that followed the 1971 and 1972 elections, the happenings other last several weeks do not augur well for either the ruling party or the country.

Four points emerge from a consideration of the development in Gujarat on the one hand and U. P. on the other. Firstly despite massive discontent at the performance of the government a sizable section of the public sees no viable alternative to continuing to vote for the Congress. This is an inherently unstable position for the Congress and should cause less rejoicing and more introspection. The nearly lack of relationship between a government's performance and the vote for it cannot be a matter of comfort event to the victorious Congress Party.

Secondly, the Opposition parties frustrated the electoral arena more than ever before, are likely to take to the war path, especially in the urban areas. There is evidence of this mood in the latest phase of the Gujarat agitation in which the idealistic leadership from the

academic community seems to have lost control of what was in the beginning a spontaneous agitation against official corruption and repression, and other organised groups bent upon spreading disorder have taken over and let loose terrorism and repression of their own.

### New Interests

Thirdly as the confrontation between the Congress and a wide array of Opposition and disgruntled elements has grown new vested interests in the rural areas (mostly middle caste "kulaks") who have acquired an arrogant sense of power, are bent upon monopolising the gains of development greatly resent policies aimed at giving to the lower classes their due are coming out in the open against the Congress organisation, except where the latter agrees to continue to act as their instrument.

On the other hand, the far more numerous rural poor have also become conscious of their power but have so far—as shown again by the recent elections—support the Congress and Mrs Gandhi whom they continue to look upon as their saviour. They are at the same time experiencing great economic hardships and—something that they resent even more—continuing social humiliation.

Fourthly, there is the idealistic but extremely restive element whose capacity to paralyse the system if they feel no stake in it is well known, namely the student community (often aided by sections of the teachers). Coming largely from the well-to-do middle class, unaware of the hardships to which they put the lower classes through their agitations, at the same time highly sensitive to issues like corruption in public life, the students are prepared to work for a cause (as evidenced by the large hordes of them who turned up work both for the Congress following Mrs Gandhi's call for "*garibi hatao*" and against it when it is seen to be corrupt and self-aggrandising). But they are also liable to become unwitting instruments of political parties and groups whose aims are quite different from theirs.

### Corrupting Influences

The Gujarat agitation has brought forth both the power and the precarious balance of student based agitations. In the end the student

community was badly divided, largely on party lines, something they had successfully avoided in the beginning. And a few of them appeared to be vulenerale to the very corrupting influences against which the agitation has been launched.

On each of these counts the Congress Party must accent a good deal of the blame. A large part of the people still look upon it to deliver the goods. But by and large Congressmen in the various States falled to perform their role as articulators of people's interests, with the result that while the part may win or lose elections, its capacity to mobilise the people and resructure its organisation on that basis has been sadly lacking. In fact, even the contact that once existed between Congressmen and the people has greatly declined. It is this vacuum in the palatal structure that accounts for the great spurt of agitations of late, with the Opposition parties—whose own record at party-building has been dismal taking full advantage of the situation and making "law and order" once again the prime concern of government.

Meanwhile, the failure of the Congress to curb the power of the kulaks to the rural areas and the moneyed interests in the urban areas has given them the dual advantage of both bending the government to serve their ends (largely through the use of money) and siding Opposition element whose main aim is to dislodge Mrs Gandhi from power. Similarly, the neglect of the student and youth fronts by the Congress in all but two States (Kerala and West Bengal) has thanks to their penetration by other parties, further eroded the legitimacy of the Congress.

**Regaining Credibility**

The aftermath of the U. P. election and the firm handling of the Gujarat situation provide a chance to the leadership to ponder over its failings so far. retrace its steps and resume, the curse promised by it in the wake of the 1971 mandate. There have been some hopeful beginnings which can be built upon further. Both the removal of Mr. Kamlapati Tripathi from U. P. politics and the refusal to give the Congress ticket to large number of incumbents who had been discredited in the public eye have been important factors behind the revival of the Congress in U. P. (where it did better than in both 1967 and 1969).

Similarly in Gujarat—though this should have been done much earlier—the readiness to side track factional leaders, the expulsion of Mr Chiman Patel, and the gradual acceptance of the idea that the party will have to be built *de novo* if it is to regain its credibility are all welcome signs. Perhaps this will be followed by facing straight up to the challenge posed by the kulak lobby of the Patidars and cognate caste groups and supporting me like Jhinabhal Darji with their strong base in the numerous lower castes backward classes and the tribals in their efforts to build a firm rural base for the party. There is no need to adopt Stalinist methods but a degree of coercion for implementing social goals and dealing with vested interests who are bent upon undermining those goals and taking the law in their hands is clearly called forth.

The key to the whole challenge that face the country, however, lies in reviving the Congress organisation and restoring to it its history role in the country's political structure. The Opposition's role in the Indian System has always been large but different from other two party and multi-party systems: expressing dissent along a wide spectrum artiulating the needs and interests of neglected strata, influencing the internal factional and ideological balance of the Congress, and even occasionally replacing the party in power in one or more states whenever it has strayed too far away from its obligations to the people. It is not its role, however, to provide a total alternate to the Congress. But it has of ten happened that when the performance of the Congress has declined nd its credibility has suffered, both the Opposition parties and the Congress lose their perspective, with the former aiming at more than it can achieve and the latter indulging in all kinds of shortcuts-including too much reliance on bureaucracy, an irrational view of the role of money in polities, and a general withdraw from the true functions of the ruling party in a developing polity.

If the leadership in India means to use the new opportunity that the electorate in U. P. and the academic community in Gujarat have rebuilding the congress pay on the basis of a clean understanding of its true allies, a proper perception of its mandate and what it means to the people, and a determination to make the party an instrument of national purpose. The bureacuracy, the planning and technocratic

structures and other elements in the machinery of government have important roles to play in implementing the party mandate but they canto hope to take on the functions of the party at lower levels without which the mandate will remain only on paper. Nor can they provide an alternative framework for the governance of the country to the one provided by the Congress. At the same time, however, it is also clear that it will not be possible to put the Congress on a firm footing except by bold and unequivocal decisions on what the party stands for; for whom it is to work: and by whom it is to be run.

It is on these issues that Mr Gandhi needs to ponder in the coming weeks and chart out a course of action. The challenge that faces her is by no means over even asking for immediate results. But they do want to be convinced that the Government means business and is determined to put an end to an atmosphere so draft, mounting corruption and gross neglect of the people's ordinary needs.

## DR. SHARMA AGAIN[16]

Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma rightly fears that the kind of unrest that has overtaken Gujarat may spread. But he seems determined not to consider why. Or possibly he already knows the answer; and since it is damaging to the ruling party he is trying to forestall further public questioning by inventing in advance an explanation which conveniently absolves the Congress. He is not alone in attempting this. Congress spokesmen have long been blaming nearly all the nation's difficulties on sinister external and internal forces. In the recent election speeches Mrs. Gandhi sought to create the impression that Opposition parties had conspired to subvert the Government's economic effort. If people were discontented or restive, that too, apparently, was due to the Opposition. Characteristically, Dr. Sharma has taken the cue and embellished the Congress case without the slightest regard for credibility or coherence. When he took it upon himself to step up a campaign against the CIA. some of his bizarre allegations must have embarrassed even some of his party colleagues. Now he has conjured up a still more diabolical Opposition conspiracy to create a Gujarat type situation in Delhi and other areas. Apparently the Opposition parties have left the final planning to the RSS. If

therefore, unrest spreads to west Bengal or Orissa, we will be expected to believe that the CPI (M) or the Pragati Party has finally turned to the RSS for overall leadership.

All this would have been comic if Dr. Sharma had not been the President of the ruling party; if the party was not become so desperate as to believe that his brand of propaganda could serve any purpose; and, most important, it even Government leaders had not tried to make it appear that what was happening in Gujarat, and might happen elsewhere, was no more than a political conflict between the Congress and the Opposition. As a political tool, Dr Sharma may have his uses: but these are manifestly limited. Those who matter in the party need to realize that his efforts to improve upon what they say helps only in generating more cynicism. They need also to realize that nobody in the country, not even any of their own followers, believes that more than 80 people have died in Gujarat because they were misled by Opposition parties trying to discredit the Congress. Had the Opposition been so strong as to sustain an agitation for so long add on such a scale, the political scene would have been vastly different. Admittedly the Opposition tries to work up and intensify anti-Government agitation: but what has been happening in Gujarat can be explained only as a spontaneous and determined rejection of Government policies by the people as a whole.

## THE POLITICAL SCENE[19]

### Getting Cosily Together

There are few straws in the wind in Delhi as significant as Mr Gandhi's agreement to include Mr. Chandra Shekhar in the Congress list for the Rajya Sabha from U. P. Parliament's lobbies are buzzing with rumours about Mr Chandra Shekhar's new understanding with Mrs Gandhi, and the Prime Minister's friends are letting it be known that this is a demonstration of her new approach.

This approach is being described as a "holding together" operation, a form of consensus politics in the Congress Party. Mr. Chandra Shekhar has come a long way from his "Young Turk" days, an appellation that is now outmoded if ever it was valid. Reportedly

satisfied with Mr. Bahuguna's list of candidates in the recent elections in U. P., Mr. Chandra Shekhar has been getting ready to buttress Mrs S. A. Dange, for choosing to give a "certificate" to Mrs. Gandhi. For the rest, he has remained content with being seen but not heard.

According to Mrs. Gandhi's supporters, Mr. Chandra Shekhar represents a significant section of the non-Communist radical Left which the Congress must take into account. In the new consensus policy Mrs Gandhi intends to follow he is considered as essential as Mr Dinesh Singh, despite the melodrama over the latter's earlier suspension from the party. It is admitted in Mrs. Gandhi's camp that Mr. Dinesh Singh worked hard for the party in the U. P. elections.

The new approach was emphasized by Mr. Chandrajit Yadav's studiedly cautious comment on Mr. Morarji Desai's activities in Gujarat. It is still being suggested in Congress circles that there is really no quarrel with individual Congress (O) members; they are welcome to join the fold quietly. And Mr. K. Kamaraj's arrival in Delhi this week was a rallying point for those who hope for an official "merger" of the two parties. At the same time, word has spread that any attempt to form groups in the Congress, such as the two "forums" wound up last year, will be resisted.

The "let-a-hundered flowers bloom" phase in the Congress is apparently not affected by Mr Chimanbhai Patel's expulsion. Apparently, Mrs Gandhi felt that, by openly defying the party he had left her no other option. Besides, an important reason for the severity of the action against Mr Patel was the need to buy peace in the State, But this has predictably proved to be illusory.

By all accounts, the atmosphere of tolerance being propagated in the parts to help Mrs. Gandhi to follow "production-oriented policies and build up stocks of grain in the coming months.

It is being recalled in Mrs. Gandhi's camp today that, in their effort to appear radical, most Chief Ministers enthusiastically supported the State takeover of wheat trade. But not many of the supporters care to remember that the populist slogans propagated during the days of the Congress split were largely responsible for starting a competition in radical posturing.

Are any thoughts being given to checking the corruption? Mrs. Gandhi's supporters point to her rather low-key reference (in her reply to the debate in the Rajya Sabha on the president's Address) to the need to reduce election expenses. Perhaps in response to Mr. Chananbhai Patel's reported remarks in Delhi about the funds he raised for the party's election campaign, the suggestion being promoted is that it will be a good idea to legalize Company donations to political parties. It is felt by some that, by making such donations illegal, the Government is merely encouraging people to claim that companies have contributed vast sums to Congress coffers. The implication that this is to so will be challenged by many.

Mrs. Gandhi has, of course, many kinds of supporters in the party. The ordinary member of the Parliamentary Party is content to drift along. He does not see any signs of purposeful action by the leadership. At the drop of a hat, he will talk about corruption in the Central and State Governments.

Indeed the immediate problem facing Mrs Gandhi is to convince party members that she has learnt some lessons from the recent elections and that she plans to check the present drift by more purposeful policies. A cabinet reshuffle can have meaning in this context only if it represents a clean break with the past. Today Congress Party members, except those given position of authority, are listless and frustrated. They do not see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Given the mood of her party, how can Mrs. Gandhi expect to enthuse the people at large?

The dissolution of the Gujarat Assembly is inevitable. The only thing that remains to be determined is the timing. The Centre has belatedly recognized the seriousness of the situation and its implications, highlighted by the attempt to humiliate a Congress MLA somewhat in the fashion of the Red Guards treatment of alleged revisionists during the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

Mrs. Gandhi wants to ensure that the State will have a prolonged period of President's Rule. Obviously, it is feared in Delhi that if election are held in the prevailing atmosphere the result may be a disaster for the Congress.

It is not only in the fields of food and industrial production, to mention Gujarat, that the Central Government is guilty of inexcusable delays. Speculation over General G. G. Bewoor's successor as the next Army Chief is taking on an avoidable complexion because of the Government's failure to decide. General Bewoor retires in August this year and the Centre has chosen to disregard the convention that an Army Chief should be told well in advance whether his term is to be extended by a year or more.

· The need for an early decision is underlined by the impression being created in some Army circles that a last-minute extension of General Bewoor's term would help Lt-Gen T.N. Raina to succeed him. This is because retirements this summer will rule out the three seniority Army Commanders, including Lt-Gen P. S. Bhagat, who would normally have succeeded General Bewoor on grounds of seniority and merit. The next in line after the three senior Army Commanders is Lt-Gen N. C. Rawley, who has about a year of is present term to complete. An extension for General Bewoor would therefore, leave the field open foı General Raina.

The World Bank's report on the Indian economy has raised hackles in both Houses of Parliament. It was of obvious interest o parliamentarians, particularly in view of the World Banks' assessment that India would need to import 10 million tonnes of grain over the next five years and that Indian official projections of foreign exchange requirements were grossly underestimated. Doubts are being expressed in Delhi over the country's ability to achieve even the unofficial target of 108 million tonnes of grain this year, and the World Bank's assessment of the size of India's foreign aid requirements contrasted with the official reiteration of the country's policy of self-reliance.

Of even greater interest the manner in which the Finance Minister. Mr. Y.B. Chavan, chose to treat members' insistence on more information and the charges against the World Bank of "leaking"the report. Mr. Chavan's reply was very much in a low key, and he chose to give the World Bank the benefit of the doubt over the "leakage".

## CWC EXPRESSES GRAVE CONCERN OVER FISCAL, POLITICAL CRISES[20]

The Congress Working Committee which met here today with Dr. S. D. Sharma in the chair expressed grave concern over the present political and economic situation of the country. Some members assailed the party leadership for going back on its declared policies.

The Working Committee will meet tommorrow again to finalise a resolution on the political situation, which is expected to be released in the afternoon.

It is not known whether there will be a reversal of the food policy, but it will be reviewed in the light of the experience gained.

Today's discussion on the political situation took place on the basis of a note circulated by the AICC office.

The Prime Minister, who is leaving for Iran tomorrow morning could not attend the evening discussions of the Working Committee.

The Working Committee in the morning session decided that the AICC will meet in July next in Delhi to consider the amendments to the party constitution.

The Working Committee will meet again in the last week of May to discuss the report of the Constitution amendment Sub-Committee, which will hold its meeting towards the end of April to finalise its proposals for amendment of the constitution.

### Violence

The discussion on the political situation took a long time in the afternoon meeting. There was great concern expressed over recent attempts by certain forces in the county who seem bent upon inciting violence and spread chaos and disorder in some parts of the country. There were acts of arson, loot and intimidation of political workers.

It was mentioned that there were open allegations against para-military organisations like the RSS and Anand Marg of organising and inciting acts of arson, loot and violence.

The Working Committee appointed a three-member sub-committee consisting of Messrs D.P. Dhar, Chandra Shekhar and

Chandrajit Yadav to give final shape to the resolution on the political situation.

The food policy will be reviewed tomorrow by the Working Committee, as some members were interested in finding out whether the recently modified policy was producing the desired result.

Among those Working Committee members who spoke at today's meeting were Messrs Jagjivan Ram. C. Subramaniam, D.P. Dhar, G. S.Ozha, Rajni Patel, Chandrajit Yadav, Vallyar Ravi, and P. R. Das Munshi.

**Failures Assailed**

Meanwhile UNI adds: For the first time since the split in the Congress, the party leadership was strongly criticised by some members of the Working Committee for not providing clear guidelines to the rank and file to met the present political and economic crisis and for going back on the declared policies.

References were also made to the rising prices of essential commodities, shortages of several items of mass consumption and charges of corruption against some Ministers being made even by some partymen.

The members wanted that the CWC should take serious note of these problems and come out with concrete and positive solutions. The allegations of corruption should not be minimised and a machirery at the party level should be set up to inquire into such allegations.

Mr. Priya Ranjan Das Munshi assailed the Government for having reversed the policy of State takeover of foodgrains without any prior consultations with the CWC.

He recalled that this had been a solemn decision of the AICC. In future if the Government found itself unable to implement any such accepted policy, at least the CWC should be brought in the picture, Or else, the credibility gap between the people and the party would widen.

Defence Minister Jagivan Ram is understood to have been one of the outspoken critics at today's meeting. He particularly

highlighted the need for having only persons with untarnished image in Ministerial positions.

**Early Meeting Plea**

Young Turk Chandra Shekhar and Mr Vayalar Ravi regretted that the CWC had not met for the past seven months when the country had passed through critical phase. Even when it was meeting today, only a day's sitting was planned.

Strong support to their view-point came from septugenarian leader Gulzarilal Nanda, Mr. Nanda pointed to the mounting economic hardships of the people and the failure of Congressmen to face up to their problems. The Working Committee, he said, should meet for a week or so continuously.

Congress President S. D. Sharma, who was on the defensive said that no early meeting could be fixed because various dates did not suit the convenience of some Ministers or the other. If the CWC itself could not meet for a long duration, he thought that the suggestion for small groups to be set up for considering various aspects in detail could be considered.

But Mr. Chandra Shekhar and other opposed this step. He said the Working Committee as whole should be involved in such in depth study and formulation of policies and programmes.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi welcomed the suggestion that the CWC should be deeply involved in this task. She also welcomed a proposal that the Congress President himself could present a paper giving his analysis of the malaise.

Mrs. Gandhi, who was present at the morning meeting of the CWC, did not attend the evening sitting, which witness hard-hitting speeches by some members. She was preoccupied with preparations for her five-day State visit to Iran.

The CWC is having before it a long draft resolution on the political situation and separate notes submitted by Mr Chandrajit Yadav on youth problems. Mr Priya Ranjan Das Munshi on immediate tasks before the party and another one from Mr Vayalar Ravi.

Congress General Secretary Chandrajit Yadav told newsmen after the meeting that the deadline for enrolment of new members has also been extended from June 30 to September 30. This would enable to be held on the basis of the new constitution of the party.

## CONGRESS TO WARD OFF NEW AGITATIONS[21]

The Congress President, Dr. S. D. Sharma, has instructed Pradesh units to get ready to counter Opposition plans to create a Gujarat-type situation in Delhi and other areas.

The ruling party is understood to have "definite" information about an impending plan to create disorder on a large scale. The plan, it is alleged, is to be finalized by the RSS at its meting in Nagpur this week.

Dr. Sharma was confident that the Congress party in other State would be fully prepared to meet the challenge "politically". The high command would not like the party to be caught in a Gujarat-type mess in other States. Implied in it was an admission that divisions and wrangles in the ruling party gave a fillip to the trouble in Gujarat, in the first instance and found it ill prepared to meet the Opposition offensive, after the exit of Mr Chimanbhai Patel.

Dr. Sharma today sent four party members Mr P. Das Munshi, Mr. H. K.L. Bhagat, Mrs. Savita Behn, all MPs, and Mr Basu of the AICC office-to Gujarat to establish contact with students and other youth elements and to try to remove third misgivings about the Central stand on the dissolution of the State Assembly. They are expected to establish liaison with various sections of agitators during their stay in Gujarat.

Mr. Chandrajit Yadav, AICC general secretary, who returned from Ahmedabad, gave his assessment to Central leaders. According to him, students and youth elements were divided, one section favouring an early end to the agitation and the other bent upon continuing it even after the dissolution of the Assembly.

The plank of the extremists would be removal of corruption and inefficiency. He saw the hand of the Jana Sangh and RSS behind the present confusion and stressed the urgency of an immediate educative campaign to counter their moves.

The report that a Congress MP was threateningly asked to resign from Parliament by agitators was interpreted by him as a pointer to a "conspiracy" with pronounced political objectives.

Meanwhile, the Congress and Opposition MPs expressed conflicting opinions on Mr. Moraraji Desai's indefinite fast. Representatives of Opposition parties, who met under the chairmanship of Mr. N. G. Goray (Socialist), reiterated the demand for immediate dissolution of the Assembly and for holding fresh elections. They condemned the "brutal atrocities commited by the police and the military on the people of Gujarat, particularly students, leading to the death of over 100 persons". While demanding an immediate judicial inquiry into these excesses. they congratulated students for their patriotism. They expressed deep concern at Mr. Desai's fast.

The meeting was attended by Mr Piloo Mody, Mr. P. K. Deo, both Swatantra, Mr Mahavir Tyagi. Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani, Mr. Banarsi Das, Mr. Prasannabhai Mehta, Mrs. Mahinder Kaur, all Congress (O).

The Congress (O) Parliamenary Party, too, supported Mr Desai's stand and "expressed its solidarity with the cause of the people of Gujarat who are valiantly fighting a battle for the survival and strengthening of democrary."

**Breach of Constitution**

The Government. it said, had "perverted the intention of the Constitution is not dissolving the Assembly simultaneously with the imposition of President's rule. The enormity of this perverse act was compounded by its senseless obstinacy in not conceding the demand for dissolution of the Assembly even at this stage when it had been rendered functionless by the declaration of the Government that there was no intention to instal any Ministry and hold elections to the Rajya Sabha, and further, when the Assembly itself has been rendered vacuous by mass resignations."

But, 22 Congress MPs, in a statement, said that Mr. Desai's "ill-considered action will objectively contribute to the deterioration of the situation and will have the effect of adding fuel to fire."

The signatories included Mr. Satpal Kapoor, Mr. H. D. Malaviya, Mr. K. P. Unnikrishnan. Mr Amrit Nahata, Mr Bipin Pal Das,Mr. L.K. Churawat, Mr Nawal Kishore, Mr.D. P. Singh and Mr. Vayalar Ravi. "We cannot help the feeling they said, "that Mr. Desai fast is politically motivated and not in the best interests of Gujarat and the country."

## POWER-SEEKERS[22]

Neither the Congress Working Committee nor the AICC which is about to meet quite soon can be more convincing categories than the Congress itself is: and the resolutions passed by them, speeches made at their meetings, appeals made on behalf them and ponderous assertons of pristine virtue by the leaders on such and similar occasions have begun piteously to pall on people's ears. Claims such as: "The Congress, the chosen instrument of the people for accomplishing fundamental and radical changes in society, stands as an obstacle in the path of vested interests" sound empty and bogus because more than any other party, leading members of the Congress have established fruitful connection with these vested interests. Till these are mercilessly broken and the individuals cast away without remorse, tall talk about abstractions will cut no ice. The 'political resolution' repeats as if it were some sacred litany "the values of democracy, secularism, social justice and a self-reliant economy" which Congressmen must save at any cost. It is explained that these dear "values" are in imminent deril from those set on destroying democracy and establishing fascism. The resolution makes its expected bow to "radicalism", "socialism" and "the youth".

All these high-sounding abstractions, however, sound hypocritical when mouthed by men whose chief interests are somehow or the other to stick to slippery office, feather their own nests and look the other way when the hand of corruption gets too near them for heir comfort. Such abstractions have no meaning except in times of individuals, their true ambitions and their freedom from petty greed for power, office and the so-called "good things of life". The intelligent Congressman, even though his number may be quite small in this vast party, knows that the people know very well that quite a number of those who strut about as its "leaders" are in

close touch with those who lay the foundations of nation-wide corruption, are blissfully un-aware of the role of the wakening working masses and the youth in democracy and do in their secret hearts shiver at the thought of the concrete consequences of socialism.

Political parties are not made of slogans and windy abstractions. Ideologies, the "resolutions" that spell them out, and the loudly-advertised programmes to implement will be seriously taken by the people only when the human material that constitutes the party is able to draw respect from the masses. If he leadership of the Congress is truly honest it should admit to itself that it has steadily been losing this savoring capacity and it is in exact measure that this has happened that fascist causes like the R.S.S., silly groups like the Shiv Sena and the Anand Margis, opportunists like Mr. Jayaprakash Naryan and the freemasonry of tycoons have been able to threaten democracy and bring on the political stage the ghost of fascism. The Indian people will not be cowed by the threat or accept a totalitarian order: but certain Congress leaders may. Therein lies our danger.

## CONGRESS AND THE CRISIS[23]

With only a few days left for the A.I.C.C. session, the Working Committee has surveyed the economic and political situation but there has not been sufficient introspection. The Congress has both power and responsibility and it is expected to implement its decisions: like other parties, it cannot afford to take a purely, academic view of the developments in the country. Some of the Working Committee's observations, however, are important. It has condemned the acts of violence in different parts of the country and exposed the forces inciting the people to violence. But the root cause of disorder in some states should have been examined more dispassionately. For instance,there would have been no agitation by "fascists and semi-fascists" in Bihar had the Congress provided a stable and efficient administration. Congressmen in Bihar can hardly claim that they have given the state their best all these years. The story of infighting, corruption, bossism and the other weaknesses of the party invariably escape the scrutiny of the Working Committee.

Attempt at threatening the democratic institutions can be foiled if the Congress plays its role well in strengthening the democratic forces, and democracy means much more than wining elections. The fascist forces gain strength only if the democratic forces become weak, and all the critics of the Congress or of the Government should not be viewed as fascists. The para-military elements like the RSS and the Anand Margis should be curbed but even these element can be made ineffective if the Congress and the other parties believing in democracy strengthen their popular base. Congress ideology appeals to the people but of Congressmen fail to practise what they preach, the people will lose faith in the party. Mr. Krishna Kant is not correct when he says that the party has been unable to play an effective role mainly because it lacks effective and coherent ideology. There is nothing wrong with the party's ideology but the tragedy is that a large section of Congressmen do not subscribe to it. Mr. Krishna Kant, in his note to the A.I.C.C., has suggested that those who do not believe in the party's ideology should be got rid of, but what is the method of assessing each Congressman's adherence to ideology?

The economic crisis will be the main subject for discussion at the forthcoming A.I.C.C. session and the Working Committee's resolution is based on the Prime Minister's Bangalore speech. The steps which she has announced can bring down prices, but, again, the question is whether the Congress Governments in the states will implement them. The idea of taxing affluent farmers is not a new one; it has been talked about for years but no state has implemented it. Similarly, the suggestion that non-Plan expenditure should be kept under control was made several years ago but as each year passes, the extravagance of the State Governments has only been increasing. The hunt for tax-evaders is also not a recent development. Every year the Union Finance Minister's budget speech contains bold statements that ex-dodgers will be punished but their numb has been increasing.

By complimenting the Government on their stern handling of the railway strike and the recent ordinances, the Working Committee is no overlooking the hardships of the working class, a mere increase in the money income of the people is not the answer to the present crisis. By curtailing money supply, the Government want to bring

down prices but no major step has been taken to unearth black money. The A.I.C.C. should take up this issue and ask for demonetisation.

## MP ASSAILS CONGRESS FOR NOT OUSTING THE CORRUPT[24]

In a long note to AICC members. Mr. Krishna Kant, a senior MP, has strongly attacked the leadership for its "failure" to purge the party of "corrupt and undesirable" elements who do not subscribe to its policies.

Expressing serious concern at the sorry state of affairs in the Congress, Mr. Krishna Kant point out that the unprecedented price spiral in the country today is largely due to the "collusion" between traders on the one hand and politicians and bureaucrats on the other. The big shark has no fear of being caught. Occasionally, only a smally fry is caught. "With prices and corruption thus linked, there can be no national wage and income policy."

The note, marked for its frankness and harsh tone, is meant to evoke a heated discussion on major political and economic issues at the forthcoming AICC session.

> Mr. Krishna Kant, who had been lying low for several months is again in a rebellious mood. He appears confident that the AICC session will not be a tame affair and the delegates will give enough courage to hit out at the leadership for the "present mess" on the economic front. The session is being held after nearly 10 months.

Mr. Krishna Kant wonders how with growing "dissatisfaction and disillusionment" in the country. the present system is still sustained. Perhaps this is due to faith in God and the belief that Mrs. Gandhi would do something to alleviate the miseries of the people. Lack of a viable alternative to the Congress may be another reason for sustaining the democratic system.

Castigating the Congress for not taking any initiative to counteract the forces of violence in the country, Mr. Krishna Kant feels that this is an indication of the "alienation" of the party from the people. Unfortunately, the party at many places survives with the support of the administration. Within the spectrum of discontent, the most alarming feature is the mounting frustration of the youth.

Unfortunately, the party has reverted to the period prior to the 1969 split. The hopes aroused by the split have been dimmed. The same attitudes and behaviour patterns, which led to the massive anti-Congress sentiment in 1967 elections., are one more evident. The party does not function as an instrument of nation-building.

Unlike the pre-independence period when the Congress relied on mass contacts for electoral victories, it depends now on funds from richer sections. They, in turn look at these donations as business investments. This mechanism has resulted not only in the corruption of the party but in the business community infiltrating the party at various levels.

He has called upon the leadership to evolve an "effective and coherent" ideology to inspire the party. The party structure and composition have to be revised to eliminate evils such as bogus membership, rigged elections and bossism. Ways and means have to be found to generate a spirit of service in party workers.

## CMs FREE TO DROP MINISTERS: SHARMA[25]

The Congress President, Dr. S. D. Sharma, has said that a Chief Minister does not need prior approval of the high command for asking his colleagues to submit their resignations to facilitate reconstitution of his cabinet.

Six months before I actually resigned, I had written out a letter of resignation along with the Secretaries and showed it to Gandhiji. He said my complaints were genuine and that he would speak to Jawaharlal and the Sardar. When six months later I again broached the subject to him. he said that I was right and had no choice left but to resign. I had therefore to efface myself. Even today it will be interesting to read the speech I made before the A.I.C.C. while laying down the reins of the highest office which was in the gift of the nation to bestow on one of its humble servants whole services were appreciated. Every word of that speech had the approval of Gandhiji. Wherever he suggested corrections, they were incorporated. In the Working Committee when I informed the members that I had made up my mind to resign. Gandhiji suggested that Narendra Deva of the Socialist group in the Congress should succeed me. Jawaharlal approved of the idea but the Sardar objected

on the ground that it would not be a representative choice. Nothing was decided.

Jawaharlal and the Sardar then approached Rajendra Babu to resign his Food portfolio in the Interim Government and take up the work of the Congress, Rajendra Babu did not approve of the idea. He went to consult Gandhiji. He was against his leaving the portfolio of Food and Agriculture. Rajendra Babu himself told me that he did not like the change, because he was just then getting a "grip over the food situation". However, Jawaharlal and Vallabhabhai ultimately prevailed upon him to become the Congress President. In the final decision that Rajendra Babu took, he had not consulted Gandhiji. Gandhiji expressed surprises when he learnt that Rajendra Babu had given his consent to the change.

These days Gandhij's anguish of heart found expression in his pubic utterances, mostly at his prayer-meetings. As already mentioned he no more wanted to live, rather he talked of his death. This was due not only to the partition but the way the Government and the Congress organisation were functioning. neither in the Government nor in the organisation was there unity. He had sometimes to settle the differences between Jawaharlal and the Sardar. This he had to do even when they had to do even when they had lost faith in his leadership. One day he told me, "Jawaharlal at least tries to understand me, thought he may not follow my advice, but Vallabhbhai thinks that I have become old and lost grip over reality."

Seeing the condition of the organisation, Gandhiji suggested that the Congress which represented all sections of the people should be converted into a Lok Sevak Sangh. This, he thought, would check the rot in the Congress and cleanse the political atmosphere in the country. For political purposes he wanted the leaders holding different views to organise their own political parties. A few days before his death, he talked to us about his concept of the Lok Sevak Sangh. The day he was assassinated he handed over a draft of its constitution to Pyarelal.

The communal situation in Delhi remained tense in spite of the efforts of many social and political workers. Gandhiji got no rest. In fact, some friends made it a point to go and unburden themselves to

him even about trivial incidents in connection with the difficulties of the minorities. Gandhiji's soul was in travail. He who could sleep like a child and during night journes sleep in between stations, where he received tumultuous ovations, now had disturbed sleep. He was also conscious that he was not acting like a true *Karmayogi or Sthitaprajna* of the *Gita,* unaffected by the pairs of opposites, pleasure and pain, good and evil, success and failure. About this he says: "If one has completely merged oneself with Him, one should be content to leave good and bad, success and failure to Him and be careful for nothing. I feel I have not attained that state and, therefore, my serving is incomplete."

There were some stray cases of violence against the Muslims. They should have been brought to the notice of the Government, which was dealing with the situation and had brought it under reasonable control. Instead, these reports were carried in an exaggerated form to Gandhiji who was in poor health at the time and under very great mental strain. This led him to go on a fast.

At least in Delhi, Gandhiji said the Muslim should feel safe. What was happening in Delhi was in retaliation for what had happened and was happening in Pakistan. He did not want this kind of retaliation. Sometimes in his prayer meetings he had said that if the Hindus suffered in Pakistan, that was no reason to heap sufferings on innocent Muslims in India. If Hindu property was looted in Pakistan, the same must not happen to Muslim property at the hands of Hindus and Sikhs. If Hindu houses were occupied by Muslims in Pakistan, Muslim houses must not be occupied by Hindus even if they were deserted by Muslims who had led to Pakistan. If Hindu places of worship were desecrated in Pakistan, the same must no happen to Muslim places of worship in India. If any mosque was destroyed, it must be rebuilt by the Hindus and Sikhs. It was usual for Gandhiji to insist upon a better standard of conduct from those whom he considered his own than from those who considered themselves his opponents or enemies.

Gandhiji started his fast on January 13, 1948. On the 18th he was able to give up the fast on an assurance given to him by the representatives of the Hindu and Sikh communities that they would see that no disturbance took place in Delhi and the conditions he had

laid down were fulfilled. The Muslim leaders also promised that they would see that their community did nothing to aggravate the situation.

# 4

# The Secular Leader: Election as President

Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma had endeared himself as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of Parliament) due to his democratic behaviour and wise handling of the proceeding of the house. Even the opposition leaders had developed great regards for him and had publically declared their support to him in his election as President of India. When his name was announced by the Congress President P. V. Narsimha Rao for election as President some political parties declared their opposition to Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma's election as President of India. The Bharatiya Janta Party and the Janta Dal and some other smaller parties opposed him and declared Prof. G. S. Swell as their candidate.

The Indian Press and the common people were, however, sure that Dr Sharma will win. This chapter deals with this high drama, which ultimately ended in Dr Sharma's election as ninth President of India on 16th , July 1992.

### RAO MEETS SHARMA ON NOMINATION

The Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narashimha Rao, called on the vice-president, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, here apparently to convey to him personally that he is the Congress candidate for the Presidential election.

Mr. Rao is also understood to have conveyed to Dr Sharma that his candidature for President had received encouraging unanimity from major political parties. The meetings lasted about 30 minutes.

The Presidential election is scheduled for July 13 with Mr. R. Venkataraman's term as the country's eighth head of state ending on July 24.

Poll in August: Since Mr Rao is yet to conclude consultations within the ruling Congress and other political parties and groups on a vice-presidential candidate, the nomination in this regard will take some time. The election of vice-president is due in August.

This will give sufficient breathing space to work out similar unanimity on the choice of a candidate for the post of vice-president.

On his part, the Prime Minister has pursued the politics of consensus and the same approach is likely to prevail in selecting candidate for the office of vice-president.

The cultured and affable Dr Sharma is like the ordinary man next door. He was one of the old guards in the Congress when he became Vice-President in August 1987.

The septuagenarian Dr Sharma is an M. A. in English literature, Hindi (with Sanskrit), LL.M (Cantab), and Ph. D, Bar-at-Law—he had been to Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University, Harward Law School and the Lincolns Inn. Before jumping into politics, he used to teach law at Lucknow University.

**Chief Minister:** Dr Sharma has served both at the Centre and the erstwhile princely Bhopal state. He was Chief Minister of the then Bhopal state way back in 1952 after being president of the Bhopal Congress Committee from 1950-52.

He has seen the Congress party through many crisis. He has held the party's highest post—president.

## THE MAKING OF A PRESIDENT

It's election time once more. And the question is: who will be the next President of India? Will it be as simple as elevating Vice-President Shankar Dayal Sharma? Or will it be a SC/ST candidate like Buta Singh or Shankaranad? Or will he be a dark horse like S. B. Chavan? The odds on favourite is S. D. Sharma. And, may be, contesting against him will be that maverick, Ram Jethmalani, who wants to take on the system. K. Srinivsan reports.

There is nothing electric or exciting about the Indian Presidency anymore. All that went with Rajendra Prasad—the Republic's first head of State and the only man with the courage to tell chastise and tick off Prime Minister Nehru. Prasad declined to be a rubber stamp, fretted and fumed at the efforts to put him in a straight jacket and often broke free in defiance. It is no surprise that the Congress bosses were both wary and suspicious of him. Yet he sought and got a second term despite Panditji's deep reservations.

Rajenbabu presided over the Republic when many of the stalwarts of the freedom struggle were still around. The Republic was young in age but there were seasoned men of character and integrity to ponder over its destiny. In the four decades plus since then the Presidency has, to put it mildly, lost all its gloss and sheen. The office is increasingly viewed as neither relevant nor credible. Rajenbabu has now become the benchmark of what the Presidency should mean. He is often quoted, recalled and cited for the standards he set. But when it comes to the crunch those who swear by his values, look elsewhere for their President. Such is the politics and its compulsion!

Frankly, is there any basis for choosing a Presidential nominee? What is the expection of the succeeding Prime Ministers from the head of state? And what is it that they fear of him? By and large observers agree that there is simply no basis on which candidates are nominated for election. As one critic pithly aid it has now become a method of nominating someone who is "least unacceptable." No wonder the race for the crown produces candidates like Buta Singh who touches the feet of Chandraswami every time or Shankaraand who has made the mockery of the Petroleum Ministry and either made himself the laughing stock in Delhi with JPC Report on Bofors.

Caste too has made its debut in Presidential politics. There has been some effort to have a Harijan as the country's Ninth President. After all what better way to remember Ambedkar on his Birth Centenary than having a dalit in Rashtrapati Bhawan. V.P. Singh's threat to quit Parliament if he fails to nominate a Harijan for the position is characteristic of his blackmail politics. Stung by Jethmalani's unilateral decision to contest and the backing he

received from many of his party colleagues as well as the Left's denouncement of caste as a criteria for choosing Presidential candidates. Singh apparently believes he can wring them into submission by becoming an extremist. If not them, at least the JD. He was dead right, the party's Parliamentary Board meekly capitulated to his wishes and endorsed it.

His comrade-in-arms Ram Vilas Paswan is delighted with the Raja's stance. He looks beyond the JD towards the 106 and score MLAs nd MLCs who have united under the confederation of SC/ST MPs and are vociferous in their demand to Mandalise the Presidency. Ram Dhan, the outspoken Harijan who heads the SC/ST Commission was blunt in asserting that Vilas and Co should stop eyeing the Presidency when one can't find qualified members for the Commission. Nevertheless Paswan carries on. The point is will Singh or Paswan accept the mazhabi Buta Singh who cleared the decks for the "Shilapujan" at Aydohya or Shankarnad, the Harijan from Karanataka who produced the sanstised report on Bofors be condemned? Is Singh prepared to gloss over their unacceptable deeds because of their Caste?

There is nothing original anymore in what the Left has to offer. Despite experiencing the cutting edge of figurehead President's watching passively as governments were being dismissed, majorities fudged, ministries overthrown and elections cancelled, Harkishan Singh Surjeet and his poliburo have only one concern: how to isolate the BJP and keep them away from joining hands with the Congress? And if that means agreeing on a conceptual amby pamby then so be it.

For the saffron brigade the chickens came home to roost when the AICC political resolution at Tirupathi castigated them as a communal force. It was a rude shock to L.K. Advani. He had applauded Narashimha Rao and subtely suggested at home and abroad during his high profile tour of the US that Rao was a fine PM, he was there to stay and that the BJP would do nothing to bring him down. The deteriorating relation with the Congress apart, the BJP has performed badly in the By-elections. It failed to win a single seat in Shimla where it is in power and faces the specter of a party with poor administration in four states, diluting all the gains that the last

two elections have brought them. Ram is still to get his mandir, Kashmir hasn't been saved and everything seems to be turning sour.

**So What Do They Do?**

Quite obviously create a shindig and provide evidence of being a real opposition. Advani in his several rounds of discussion with Narashimha Rao seems to have finally told him that the Presidential elections will have to be a package with Vice Presidency being decided right away irrespective of when the polls are held. It is something that Rao is not willing to buy. In his meeting with Rao, K. N. Singh and naval Kishore Sharma just before he left for England. Surjeet raised the same point. But Rao indicated that he wished to delink the two elections. Surjeet apparently told the Rao that he would deal them rather than junior flunkeys like Communications Minister Rajesh Pilot. *Unko bhejeeiye jinki hum bhasha samajhte hain aur jo hamari bhasha samajhte hain,* "he said looking towards measures Singh and Sharma.

Apparently the two agreed and settled on Shankar Dayal Sharma. And what happens if the JD, the largest component of the National Front declines to go with that? Surjeet indicated that he was willing to break away to support Sharma. While NTR hasn't gone to that extent, the TDP Chief has also rejected the caste criteria for selection. Anyway to come back to Advani, BJP will in all probability try and put up its candidate to prove its opposition credentials to retrieve some of its sheen. Who will they choose to back?

And this is where Ram Jethmalani comes in. The top criminal lawyer who announced his candidacy two weeks back, with the backing of the some of the smaller parties like the JMM, AGP, Akali Dal; Shiv Sena and Co hopes that JD and the BJP would see sense and back his desire to restore some semblance of respectability to Presidency. "I want the President to be someone who has the special faculty to deal with some of the many pressing problems of the country." said Jethmalani during a conversation. He deplored the efforts to make the Presidency a party affair "where candidates looked at the Rashtrapati Bhawan as a comfortable sinecure. "Jethmalani believes that it is time someone made a serious attempt

to define and make a statement on all he complex issues that govern the Presidency. "Rashtrapati Bhawan and Raj Bhawans have become a reward for past service. There is simply no contribution to make," said Jethmalani angrily.

His campaign so far has been remarkably structured. In every sense it is the first real attempt at giving the Presidential election a western professional poll package where the candidate markets him self and the positions that he has taken. Unlike the coypostures that most Presidential nominees take in the name of being above politics and being against lowering the dignity of the office by campaigning for it. "Ram," said Jagdish Kapri, his most important campaign manager." "will travel to all the state capitals to canvas directly with his voters." Kapri who runs a successful advertising and media outfit has designed a highly impressionable programme that includes a road show beginning with a clip of the candidate, his selected opinions on .diverse subjects before he gets down to answer questions and starts mingling with his voters. The only part that worries Kapri is the mandatory media conference in every centre "Ram is highly emotional," Kapri said and added that if the press dig into him he is bound to let loose. "That can be damaging." He said. It happened earlier in Bombay and Calcutta when it was Jethmalani's acceptance of Harshad Mehta's retainer that hit the headlines. The candidacy was buried in the fourth paragraph. Mehta obviously was more exciting and newsy!

To test the waters Kapri put Jethmalani through a mock survey in major metros like Bombay, Bangalor and Delhi. The poll was conducted with prospective voters—MLA's, MLC's and MPs—being queried on his suitability for the job. Kapri climbs that he did pretty well in most areas. But he admits that the candidate did badly in his hometown-Bombay!

While Jethmalani wants to get rid of the rubber stamp image of the Presidency, Dr Karan Singh who has been in the running for the top job himself, views it differently. He accepts the constitutional responsibilities that goes with office of Head of State but believes that the Rashtrapati should be more like "an *acharya,* though, in the non-denominational sense of the word. He should be able to communicate well and show the vision and, at times, ideas that can

provide the nation with positive vibes," he said. He is applied at the tense relationship between the President and the Prime Minister evoked during Zail Singh's tenure when Rajiv Gandhi was in the office. "Such a relationship can be disastrous for the country. After all the President is the symbol is the state and the Prime Minister the head of government," said Dr Singh in a free wheeling interview.

Jethmalani is categorical that the President's first obligation is not to please the Prime Minister but discharge his duties as per the letter and spirit of the constitution. Karan Singh takes a more soft stance. He believes that by and large we have good system. In real terms the success of the job is marked by the "warmth in the relationship or chemistry between the PM and the President." "One has to be balanced and helpful", he said.

Karan Singh believes that by and large have a good system. In real terms the success of the job is marked by the warmth in the relationship or chemistry between the PM and the President. One has to be balanced and helpful.

Rao indicated that he wished to delink the two elections. Surjeet apparently old the Rao that he would deal with him rather than flunkeys like Communications Minister Rajesh Pilot. Apparently the two agreed and settled on Shankar Sharma.

## A STATISTICAL LOOK AT THE PRESIDENTIAL POLL

Even when one of the trying to comprehend the intricacies and arithmetic of the electoral college of the election of the Tenth President of India dwell deeply into the political composition of strengths of the political parties in the assemblies and the two Houses of the Parliament before any conceivable conclusion could be arrived at.

As of now (before the results of the by-poll are known to us) the total electoral college consists of 4,478 voters who together have a vote value of 10,89,723. Of this 3,972 are from the 25 state assemblies (union territories are not included and the notification to include Pondicherry has not been ratified as yet) whole 543 Lok Sabha members and 233 Rajya Sabha members complete the total. The two segments, state assemblies and the Parliament houses,

respectively, have a total vote strength of 5,44,971 and 5,44,752 (see Box for state-wise vote value of each voter).

Following the increase in the number of seats in the assemblies of Arunachal Pradesh (30 to 60), Goa (28 to 40), Jammu and Kashmir (76 to 87) the value of the voter in these three states has come down, respectively, from 16 to 8, 28 to 20 and 83 to 73. Though it does no matter for the latter because it does not have assembly at the moment. Speaking party wise, the National Front-Left Front combine has vote strength of 1,38,274 in the two Houses of the Parliament, against 2,71,674 of the rulling Congress party and its allies of AIADMK, break away factions of he Shiv Sena and the Telgu Desam, while the primary opposition party, the BJP has a vote strength of 1,06,706, along with those of the its allies like the VJP and Bajrang Dal. The "others" account for 17,550 vote points. The positions of the three political outfits in the state assemblies is, 1,52,063 for the NF-Left, 2,31,955 for the Congress and 1,21,648 for the BJP. The others account for 19,943 votes of the assembly total of 5,44,971.

In other words of the Congress has fairly good strength of 5,03,629, to that of 2,28,352 of the BJP and 2,90,357 of the Nf-Left duo. The others again account for 37,493 votes, which may be crucial, given the close finish some observers are hoping as the BJP is swinging away from the Congress after the Tirupati plenary and the Gandhinagar Party meeting of the former. Said a Janata Dal Secretary, "We do not carry any brief from the ruling party nor the moral responsibility of keeping it afloat and the given the stand that V P Singh has taken regarding nominating a SC/ST to heat up the state. If Congress does not come around, we may forced to follow the trail of BJP."

Though he agreed that even if the JD and the BJP, by sheer force of circumstances come to vote for the same person against the Congress candidate, the ruling party may still manage to in a razor contest. Rather, in that case the Congress party may bag both the posts, that of President and Vice President. "I do not deny the possibility of the Janata Dal votes cracking up if V. P. Singh stick to his guns the secretary opined.

If Mukul was a former Youth Congress President and a young leader of the movement to back a SC/ST for the top post in the nation believes that as long as SC/ST candidate is being picked for either of two posts of President and Vice-President, we will be quite satisfied. "Ram Vilas Paswan will be remembered even five thousand years later or the movement of upliftment of the Dalits in this country."

Lastly, the Congress is depending on the gamesmanship of PM Narsimha Rai. The divided opposition is an advantage to him.

**As a result Congress Finds Itself In a Better Position**

| *State* | *No of Assembly Seats (elective) of Legislative* | *Value Of a member assembly* | *Votes Total votes for the State* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* |
| Andhra Pradesh | 294x | 148= | 43.512 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 60x | 8= | 480 |
| Assam | 126x | 116= | 14.616 |
| Bihar | 324x | 174= | 56.276 |
| Goa | 40x | 20= | 800 |
| Gujarat | 182x | 147= | 26.754 |
| Haryana | 90x | 112= | 10.080 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 68x | 51= | 3.468 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 87x | 72= | 6.264 |
| Karnataka | 224x | 131= | 29.344 |
| Kerala | 140x | 151= | 21.280 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 320x | 130= | 41.600 |
| Maharashtra | 288x | 175= | 50.400 |
| Manipur | 60x | 15= | 1.080 |
| Meghalaya | 60x | 17= | 1.020 |
| Mizoram | 40x | 8= | 320 |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nagaland | 60x | 9= | 540 |
| Orissa | 147x | 117= | 21,903 |
| Punjab | 117x | 116= | 13,572 |
| Rajasthan | 200x | 129= | 25.800 |
| Sikkim | 32x | 7= | 224 |
| Tamil Nadu | 234x | 176= | 41,184 |
| Tripura | 60x | 26= | 156 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 425x | 208= | 88,400 |
| West Bengal | 294x | 151= | 44.394 |
| Total | 3.972 | Total value= | 544.971 |

(a) Vote value per MP=544.971/776=702.282 or 702 (rounded) (543+233=776)

(b) Total vote value for MPs= 702 × 776=544.752 Grand total=544. 752=1.089.723

Surprisingly neither Singh nor Jethmalani touched upon the crucial role of the Presidency in the difficult times. If Jethamalani was outraged by the "continued scope" of the Constitution, Karan Singh viewed the Presidency more in the mould under statemen's role. Jethmalani wants a fearsome watchdog. Karan Singh a persuasive Acharaya.

Will the farcical President by consensus serve any purpose in such a critical one? What do we need? a caste based personality at the helm, a numby pamby or someone who can be both firm and flexible. One who can summon the Prime Minister and tick him off, who will be fearless in addressing the issues of the day and have the courage to call a spade a spade. Imagine Shankarand telling Narashimha or Sharad Pawar or Arjun Singh or for that matter Buta Singh, the political heavy-weights a few things about governance. What can you expect from a man who grovels at the feet of Chandraswami?

Jethmalni is unmindful if in the discharge of his duties there is a clash with the Prime Minister. Yet on some issues be concedes he will not go beyond the book. I cannot and will not allow the rape of the Constitution. "he stated. In instance here he has to abide by the advice of the government in spite of differences, what does he do? "My only role is to advise, counsel, persuade and delay." he said.

Given a chance to preside from Rashtrapati Bhawan what would be Jethmalani's agenda? Punjab, Kashmir and a reduction of tension in the top most priority.

Karan Singh views the population and poverty as the two greatest problems. It is difficult to fathom how either agenda fits into the challenges before the Presidency in this era. Anyway there is one issue on which both share a common cause. Karan Singh believes that plumping for a caste based Presidency is "divisive."

> "Do we want to have a fragmented society divide on caste?" asks Karan Singh incredulously. Jethmalani is more circumspect. "I will get the support." he says.

## SHANKAR DAYAL SHARMA

One of the most delightful little vignettes about S D Sharma involves Sardar Swaran Singh — a permanent fixture in most Union Cabinets of the late Sixties and early Seventies. The incident occurred a few years after Mrs Gandhi took over as Prime Minister. At that time Swaran Sigh waster links with the rest of the world. The story goes that when the country triggered off the nuclear device at Pokran in the Rajasthan desert, one of the persons, good sardar was Sharma who was then a rabble rousing left of centre Congress President. It was the heydays of socialism and S D Sharma was one of its leading light. "CIA *nu blame ka karen, yeh device aasee chhadta,* " Singh softly told Sharma. In some measure the episode is reflective of Sharma's staunch adherence to his ideology.

Sharma has since then never really been on the upfront. He has, nevertheless, moved effortlessly from one responsibility to another. Or, to put it bluntly in the words of a cynic "from one cushy sinecure to another." Governor, Ambassador Vice President...

Sharma has seen it all. And to be fair to him he has concluded himself with grace and dignity in every office that he has held. An enduring image of the man is Sharma playing with little Avantika, his grand-daughter in the high security confines of the Punjab Raj Bhawan in Chandigarh. The young girl virtually grew in the shadow of her grandparents in the tragic aftermath of the assassination of her father Lalit Makan and mother, Geethanjali, Sharma' son-in-law and daughter. Despite the shattering trauma of the tragedy Sharma never once faltered is his public postures.

He came to the Vice Presidency in 1987 after Rajiv Gandhi rejected scores of candidates. The most widely reported to these rejections was that of West Bengal Governor Nurul Hasan, who was backed by he Communists. Rajiv's logic for rejecting Hasan was that he was an atheist. Neither Hasan nor the Leftists were amused, anyway to cut a long story short, the Leftists were modlified enough when Sharma was chosen. Ideologically, he was a least, pure. Recalled from a trip to the Soviet Union, Sharma went to the Vice Presidency unanimously.

In his five years on the, Shankar Dayal Sharma has exhibited why he commands so much respect from such differing sections of the political spectrum. If the Leftists adore his ideological purity, the BJP too has time an again approved of him, thanks to his scholarly background, his rectitude the unusual firmness he has displayed in conducting the Rajya Sabha and, of course, the fact that he is thoroughbred Brahmin.

The Congress, though, has had its reservation. And on occasions many sections in the party rued their brilliant branwave in giving him the Vice Presidency. After the blowhot blowcold Giani era ended in a whimper, Congressmen were confronted with a belligerent V. P. Singh. The Thakur suddenly became a messiah who would put the country out of its morass. Rajiv Gandhi was projected as a liability—the I hume dekhnahitype.

And if the party had to chance horses midstream, who would be the best bet? Who would lead the Congress party? Out of nowhere S. D. Sharma emerged as the perfect choice to save the party. Central hall gossip and diary items was all right, but when periodicals started putting him on the cover, Sharma was forced to

formally issue a denial to stop the spread of these stories. But the logic of most stories was simple. The Raja was on the rampage. Bofors threatened to dethrone the Congress party. Who could stop V. P. Singh in the heartland to keep the party resolve the controversy over the howitzer gun. Inevitably Sharma was believed to be the party's best hope.

But it didn't help. It took a long time for the stories to die down! Apart from that, most Congressmen in the Rajya Sabha have been pretty miffed at the manner in which Sharma conducted question hour and other crucial debates. What they were looking for was an enable old man who would take their side because he was an old Congressman. S. D. Sharma would have nothing of that. He chose to conduct proceedings with an attitude that was impartial and dispassionate. It angered Congressmen cowering under the daily barbs on Bofors that the opposition was throwing at them. One one occasion, N. K. P. Salve riled Sharma so badly that he shed tears while admonishing the member. Rajiv Gandhi as the PM was present in the house. On another occasion it was Fotedar who needlessly rubbed him the wrong way!

Those who know Sharma are unequicoval that in Rasthtrapati Bhawan he would be a President who is distant figure and carries the Constitution with him at all times. If there is anything that is slightly suspect that is his health. It has neither been discussed nor debated. Two of the Republic's Presidents—Neelam Sanjiva Reddy and Zail Singh—went to the Houston soon after they took over for a By-pass surgery. President Venkataraman despite being 80 plus has led a remarkably active life. Will S. D. Sharma be able to emaulate him? Finally, for young Avantika, autumn will probably bring a new home-Rashtrapati Bhawan and the affable Moghul Gardens. And as Sharma plays with her, he can take solace in the fact that he has done his best to give his grand-daughter love, affection and some of the best homes in her growing up years!

## PRESIDENCY AND INDIAN POLITY: PAST AND PRESENT

India will have the Ninth President after a few weeks. The election of the past Eight President's was a formal affair. But the selection of

the candidate for the Presidential elections used to be made "after many deliberations".

The decision-making process by which the President were selected in the past was not marked by anxiety and apprehension about the future of the Indian polity. In fact, the successions of Prime Ministers used to evoke deep concern. Today, on the account of the prevailing political, social and economic situation within and outside the country, there is shift in the emphasis. The personality of the President is no being perceived as the sheet-anchor of national integration and stability today. The Primary focus of the debate is on the personal qualities of the candidate—maturity and sagacity, capacity to be non-partisan, and ability to promote national consensus etc.

It cannot be denied that "personality factor" is important. But it is sheer naivete. To put sole emphasis on it without considering the letters and spirit of the constitutional provisions, political conventions and traditions relating to the Presidency in Indian during the past decades does not hold good. We will have to examine the assumptions of the founder father of our constitution and ascertain whether these assumptions still hold good.

104 articles and 4 paragraphs in the various schedules of the Indian Constitution lay down the powers, responsibilities, duties and functions of the President under normal a well as emergency situations. According to Dr B. R. Ambedkar's statement in the constituent assembly.

> "The President is the head of the state but not the executive. he represents the nation but does not rule the nation..His place in the administration is that of a ceremonial device on a seal by which the decisions of the nation are known."

The original decisions of senior Congress leaders in 1947, the 42nd Constitutional amendment and the unequivocal dicta of Supreme court and the political conventions established by Pt Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. The Nehru dynasty conveyed a clear message that the President has "no Constitutional elbow-room whatever." On 8th and 9th June 1947, the Union Constitution Committee took a far-reaching decision that the President should not have special responsibilities and there should

be no clause in the Constitution about exercise of any function by the President in his discretion.

A survey of the debates on the issue of Presidency in the constituent assembly and later on in Mid-70s bring out some very significant points. Firstly, the mind of some of the top leaders was obsessed with the fear of Presidential *coup de etat,* some of them also suffered from a sort of megalomania.

Secondly, all of them were deeply conditioned by the merit and glamour of the British model which according to them was better suited to India.

Thirdly, it was believed, as a matter of faith that more responsibility and accountability should be preferred to stability (Dr Ambedkar) and this is possible under a ministerial system. Dr Ambedhkar argued that in a Non-Parliamentary system the responsibility of an executive is periodic, say after two years. But under Parliamentary or ministerial system the assessment of responsibility is both daily and periodic. Daily assessment is far more necessary in a country like India, he argued on 4th November 1948 in the Constituent Assembly.

Leaders like Nehru were rather sceptical about "too much of democratic procedure". He argued "I am for the democratic procedure. But not too much of it, which I always fear."

Lastly, how to ensure harmony between different parts of the governmental system was the primary concern of the founder fathers of the Constitution. They wanted to reduce the risk of perpetual cleavages or conflicts between legislature and executive at least in the period of infancy of the Indian democracy. This they believed, was possible under a ministerial system.

Also the fore fathers of our Constitution were influenced rather excessively by historical experiences Presidential and ministerial systems in the USA and the UK respectively. It was natural and understandable, but it was not enough because as statesmen, they were expected to foresee the dynamics of the working system in course of time. For example, they ruled out all possibilities of degeneration or changes in the ministerial system due to the functioning of Second law of thermo dynamics. They

were least aware of the implications of the rapid sweep of democratic awareness, and consciousness among the backward the weaker sections of our society. In other words, they did not have the sociological imagination to anticipate the consequences of rapid political modernization sans social and cultural advancement, viz. criminalisation and vulgrisation of political culture.

They assumed that the traditional national bourgeoisie, which has always played a historic role in social and political transformation leading to modernity, will never become irresponsible, predatory, corrupt, presumptuous and arrogant which attributes to inimical for the growth of the true freedom. In fact, during the past two decades the first generation of the middle class in rural India began to assert their claims on the political system which was primarily under the control of middle classes of the urban areas for more than five decades prior to 1947. This phenomenon is an indication of the broadening social base of the Indian democracy. But the mainstream political culture suffered a qualitative set back on account of lack of political education through a medium of a party which can promote democratic norms. The electoral processes, overwhelmed by money and muscle power, failed to reflect real public opinion and the aspirations of the people.

The socio-economic composition of legislatures deteriorated; the quality of functioning of fell down steeply. The senior, leaders who had political education during the national movement, assumed that in the future the middle classes is essential in a democracy to receive political orientation through party activities and other popular movements. But this did not happen. The ministerial system ceased to be "responsible", "representative" and "people-oriented." The "invigiorate". "interrogative" audit institutions such as Judiciary, Media, Legislature and Academics became weak and non-functional, specially during the hegemonistic reign of Nehru dynasty. During Rajiv Gandhi's regime (1984-1989) the ministerial system totally collapsed. A descent immature non-political upstart damaged the whole system. He further emasculated the Presidency.

There were wide differences between *Pradhan Mantri* and *Rashtrapati* Zail Singh. "India watched this chapter with bated breath. This will remain as a dark part of our Constitutional ethos," said Krishna Iyer. The issues which have been thrown up during

Rajiv—Zail imbroglio are too critical to be treated as ephemeral. There is a strong opinion that the President should be informed to be the affairs of his administration." Not to talk of the use of discretion. Rajiv Gandhi asserted his right to withhold information about corruption from President. In turn, Zail Singh explore the possibilities of dismissing even though his cabinet enjoyed majority. "Imagine the chaos if the lesser lords of Raj Bhavan's develop allergies towards the Non-Congress ministries and go berserk *a la* Ram Lal, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh." said Krishna Iyer.

It was during the tenure Rajiv Gandhi that the PM was surrounded by "cabals", "coteries", "claques", and "cunning mentors". This further weakened the ministerial government and heaped indignities on the post of the President.

It is true Rajiv Gandhi downgraded the Presidency. But many of his predecessors abused the cult of the supremacy of the PM over the President for the sake of power game with the ruling party and in order to resolve internal controversies and contradictions. They abused article 356 which gives the President the power of dissolve the Parliament and ask the Governor to dissolve State Assembly. The earlier President's of have been made to agree to dissolve the State Assemblies on 76 occasions since 1950 and 66 times since 1967. An analyis of the application of articles 356 shows that the authorities in the ministerial government missed their powers for political purposes. Nehru was the first PM. to misuse article 356 in Punjab against the wishes of PM President's rule was promulgated in Punjab although there was no break down of the constitutional machinery there. Gopi Chand Bhargava who enjoyed the confidence in the Punjab Assembly and could have continued as Chief Minister, resigned under pressure of Nehru resigning from Congress Parliamentary Board. Rajendra Prasad questioned whether the Govt. should be run through people authorised by the Constitution on the advice of the Congress party which had no locus standi. Prasad had the courage to raise questions before he signed on the dotted line, although he was not satisfied. But the Fifth President, Fakhruudin Ahmed, was not even given the option to protest or examine the advice of Mrs Gandhi regarding Emergency in 1975. He did no have the courage to refuse the advice of the PM. Similarly, the acting President Jatti offered futile resistance to Morarji's advice to

dissolve the elected Assemblies in Nine Congress ruled states in 1978.

To sum up, since the year 1947, in the name of stability, harmony, responsibility and accountability, sovereignty of the people, the ministerial government's headed by PM's have misused constitutional provisions relating to Presidency for power politics within the ruling party and outside. They assumed that such a system will remain health, progressively, dynamic and incorruptible.

But social dynamics and the unfoldment of the process of democratisation in an unjust society and inegalitarian economy had some adverse effects on the functioning of ministerial governmental system. The challenge of terrorism, separatism, communal violence, social tension's and widespread corruption, are too powerful and complex to be handled by an unstable, immoral and emasculated system. Presidency which has always been considered a threat to such a system which is now being viewed as the saviour of India polity. It is this which lends special significance to the election of the Ninth President of India.

But sole emphasis on personal qualities of the candidate will not do.

There is very little that a President can do. If Rajendra Prasad, who had public stature and personal qualities failed, how can the lesser leaders tame and soften the assertive and arrogant proponents of the system. What is needed is a complete review of the governmental system, the attitude and assumption of the proponents it, specially towards the Presidency, in the light of the experience. But in its present state presidency has little to offer in the process of restoration of health to the Indian polity.

## DR SHARMA ELECTED 9TH PRESIDENT

### Amidst political realignments

If Zail Singh was the fly in the ointment in the 1987 presidential election, this time round it is V. P. Singh. By the time opinion in the Congress has veered round in favour of Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma for the prestigious post, the Raja has threatened to commit political suicide if an SC/ST member is not chosen for it.

For this caste obsession, V. P. Singh has received more flak from his own party and its allies on the Left than from the Congress. Rajmohan Gandhi, secretary of the Janata Dal parliamentary party, was the first to object.

While Biju Patnaik deplored his obsession, Chandra Shekhar was blunt. He obliquely referred to the mass murders of members of the oppressed classes in fake encounters while V. P. Singh was the Chief Minister of UP.

George Fernandes, another JD heavyweight, asked if VP would accept Shankaranand, of the joint Parliamentary Committee on Bofors, as President, though he is a Scheduled Caste luminary?

Chand Ram asked if the Raja, while in power, had appointed any SC/ST member as governor, ambassador or even a bank director.

**CPB and WC not yet constituted**

These questions will remain unanwered, for that is not part of V. P. Singh's political culture. Be that as it may, now that he Congress, after a great deal of dilly-dallying, has picked Dr Sharma for the presidency, the demand for an SC/ST/Vice-President has become irresistible.

Nominations for the post of President are already on, but the Congress Party has yet formally to announces its candidate one thing, in spite of a sort of organisational election and the Tirupati plenary session, the Congress has yet to get back to the old ways of decision making.

The election for half the number of working committee members was partly undone, setting no good precedent. And then, the all-powerful Central Parliamentary Board has yet to be constituted. The selection of the Presidential nominee normally is the function of the C. P. B.

**Reasons for delay in PM's choice**

The time-consuming consensus process apart, Rao, a cautious man, has been extra cautious in making up his own mind on the

choice of the party candidate, for he is well-versed in the history of conflicts between Prime Ministers and Presidents in India.

The tantrums of Giant Zail Singh in the last presidential election immediately come to mind. His March 9, 1987 letter to Rajiv Gandhi, vetted in a newspaper guest house, is now part of the constitutional history of this country.

Complaining, inter alia, of lack of information from the head of government, he threatened to dismiss Rajiv Gandhi, despite his massive majority in Parliament, and also order his prosecution on corruption charges.

A frightended Rajiv Gandhi even kept an adjourned Parliament un-prorogued so that it could meet with lighting speed to reafirm confidence in the Rajiv government in the event of the Giant playing hanky-panky.

**Conflicts between PM's Presidents**

The Zail Singh episode is widely remembered because it was the most bizarre of its kind. But the conflict between the Presidents and Prime Minister has been endemic.

Basically, in springs from the constitutional ambiguity. While India has accepted the Westminister model of government, the country has an elected President, while the head of state of the United Kingdom is a hereditary monarch.

The executive power is, of course, vested in the President, but he exercises it on the advice of a Council of Ministers headed by a Prime Minister. This has invariably left room for differences.

The Giani kicked up a rumpus on the question of his constitutional right to get posted with information by the Prime Minister on matters relating to the administration. As the relevant Article (78) is worded, there can always be a difference between the two on the quantum of information. That was what as exploited by Giani who, on his unexpected elevation to the highest post, was prepared to sweep Mrs. Gandhi's floor.

The Giani, of course, took it to its extremity. But, as stated earlier, the conflict has been endemic. The question of presidential prerogative within limits was first raised by no other than

Dr Rajendra Prasad when Nehru was at the helm. As Nehru and Prasad were equal, they could contain their differences.

Nehru had to face the music even from his favourite President, Dr Radhakrishnan, who asked for the summary dismissal of Krishna Menon in the wake of the Sino-Indian conflict.

**Mrs. Gandhi versus Syndicate**

In the years ahead there were a number of ungainly epiosdes. After the 1967 general election, when the Congress had a lean majority in Parliament, the opposition conspired to in tall a strong man in Rashtrapati Bhavan to checkmate Mrs. Gandhi. The opposition picked on Justice Subba Rao, but he was defeated.

In 1969, again, when Dr Zakir Hussain, who defeats Subba Rao, died in office, a crisis developed. By the time relations between Mrs. Gandhi and Sydicate were at breaking point.

The Syndicate fancied the idea of a strong tenant in Rastrapati Bhavan. At the climatic AICC session at Bangalore, the Syndicate chose Sanjiva Reddy for the purpose by voting down the candidature of Jagjivan Ram, who had the backing of Mrs. Gandhi. An alarmed Mrs. Gandhi called for a conscience vote and backed V. V. Giri, and independent, and managed to defeat Sanjiva Reddy through the second preference votes of Charan Singh's party.

During the internal Emergency, Mrs. Gandhi's government enacted the 42nd Constitution amendment, making it clear that the President shall abide by whatever advice is tendered to him by his Council of Ministers.

**Sanjiva Reddy played double**

Morarji Desai was no less fussy about the role of the President. When he formed the Janata Party government, there was a vacancy in Rashtrapati Bhavan. Morarji wanted a toy and proposed the name of Ruknini Devi Arundale, taking everybody by surprise.

Ultimately the party prevailed upon Morarjibhai and he chose Sanjiva Reddy. Morarji was not against the spirit of the Constitution (42nd) amendment. He only slightly modified it through the 44 Constitution amendment.

One thought that Reddy got along famously with the Janata government. That was not the case. When the Janta split on the RSS issue, Reddy gave a chance to Charan Singh to form a government. Of all persons, Chandra Shekhar, then general secretary of the Janata Party, called for the impeachment of Sanjiva Reddy.

**Narasimha Rao's caution**

This long account highlights the short point, that a Prime Minister cannot take for granted a given President. That seems to explain Narasimha Rao's caution in the matter of choosing a presidential nominee.

At any rate, the electoral college is such that the Congress will have to lean, at least marginally, on an opposition party or group.

> Once bitten twice shy. the Left. particularly the two Communist parties. went into action to block a repeat performance of the Congress BJP collaboration in the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

The Left was aware that more than two dozen Congress members of the Lok Sabha abstained from voting for the BJP candidate for the Deputy Speakership. Thereafter came the anti-BJP resolution at Tirupati, making the Left's task easier.

**Left support on Vice-President[1]**

The Congress has at last chosen the versatile and affable Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma for the Presidentship.

If only the Congress can choose a man like K. R. Narayanan for the Vice-Presidentship. It may find support from most Left secular forces.

The process has been helped by the results of the by-elections in nine states. Overall, the Congress has not done well. But the BJP has not been the gainer. It has slipped badly. not only in the New Delhi parliamentary constitutency. but also in the entire Hindi belt.

In sum, the election for the ninth President of India is being held in the midst of political realignments.

## AN SC/ST CAN ALSO MAKE A PERFECT PRESIDENT

**Arunanchalam**

With hundreds of MPs and thousands of legislators, belonging to SC/ST, of political parties of different hues backing them to the hilt a new leadership cutting across party lines is all set to crush the upper caste dominance in all fields specially politics. Though they detest the idea of any specific caste division in the society, they are however categorical about equality among all. They are clear in their mind that the equality and if possible, prominence, for the SC/ST should begin from Narasimha Rao government itself. Those leaders backing this theory an the group include Ram Vilas Paswan, Buta Singh. Maharani Bibhu Kumari Devi, Arvind Netam, Dilip Singh Bhuriya and others. They have opened a national office at Buta Singh's residence and have named it as "Ekta Bhavan'. Upper caste politicians see their efforts as pressure tacitics and a bid to earn ministerial berth for themselves. The SC/ST leaders pooh-pooh their critics claiming 'such wrong propaganda has always cowed us down. But not this time. We are determined to achieve our goals. They have the unflinching support of all SC/ST ministers to lend them credibility. Among them are: M Arunchalam, Shankaranand, Dalbir Singh and all others. Because of their ministerial responsibilities, they are unable to support them openly but are helping them with the success of uniquely conceptualised 'SC/ST parliamentarians' Forum' convention held for three days last week in the capital where all the speakers unambiguously demanded an SC/ST candidate for presidentship. "There is nothing to feel bad about such a demand", says Union Minister Arunachalam in an exclusive interview with SOUMITRA BOSE. Excerpts

**Why is there a demand for SC/ST President?**

What's wrong in it? Aren't SC/ST human beings? Don't they have right to live? Aren't they equal to others in this country according to the Constitution? Why can't an SC/ST be a President? I don't see anything wrong in it.

**What if Congress chooses a non-SC/ST candidate?**

It's okay. We will have to abide by our party's decision. It is a separate issue. The point is, an SC/ST can also be a President.

**Is it not an irony that so far not one SC/ST has been a President?**

Well, that must have been because of circumstances. I don't see anything wrong in it.

**Don't you think there was a deliberate attempt to keep the SC/ST at bay from the country's top position?**

No I don't think so.

**Then why are you stressing an SC/ST President this time?**

We are not stressing on that factor. We support and we believe an SC/ST can also make a perfect President like anyone else. Our idea is not creating tension among the castes in the society. We want equality among all. Is that a wrong demand?

**Congress has ruled the country for over 40 years. Why has it failed to bring about that equality. Why are SC/ST not on par with upper castes?**

We can't put it like that. Much has happened since independence. When I was a school boy I was not allowed to enter the temples. Today, I am called in the same temples.

**That is obviously because you are a minister.**

(Laughs heartily). In village, rural areas and even semiurban areas, I agree a lot still needs to be done for the SC/ST. The government has accorded constitutional status to the SC/ST Commission. The are authorised to take the people to task who harass the SC/ST.

**If you are so sure about this commission then why have conference only for SC/ST?**

Why not. Only SC/ST will known their specific economic, social political problems in the society. They, like any other

Indians are free to discuss these issues. There is no bar on that. I can ask you, why should the *brahmins* have their own conference? Why should the Jains have their conference? Similarly, why should the Thakurs have their conference? This does not men they are creating pressure groups or any kind of tension in the society. They want to analyse the difficulties they are facing and later perhaps, they want to take it up with the government so on and so forth.

**Are you trying to say you will take up all SC/ST problems with the government?**

Is there any wrong in it? Government is here to see justice to all with equal views...I think the conference is a good effort on the part of all SC/ST elected representatives to come on one platform and discuss their problems unitedly.

Politically, it means they are creating a pressure group.

No that is not the idea at all. It's a false apprehension

**Congress** has not adequately done enough welfare for the SC/ST. Comment.

That is not correct. Apart from Congress, many other parties have ruled this country from time to time. Let's hear. What they have done for the welfare the SC/ST. Secondly, nobody can do what Indirajee and Rajivjee have done for the SC/ST in this country. They had given special programmes for the overall welfare of the SC/ST integrated Rural Development Programme, National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme etc.

**Somehow one feels the present government is not according whole hearted recognition to the SC/ST.**

**Why? We have a leader in Buta Singh. He is now fully on the sideline.**

He was at the helm of affairs for a long time. The party has a SC general secretary. There is an SC cabinet minister.

**Is that enough? Shouldn't there be more SC cabinet ministers?**

If fully agree with you. But since the formation of the ministry, prime minister has not gone for a reshuffle till date. We will have to wait and see his next move and then comment about it.

**Why is there an effort to keep SC/ST at bay generally?**

I don't agree with you fully because SC/ST are coming up very fast. No effort to keep them at bay will be successful any more. I agree with you that adequate representation is not there and they are still far behind but it will not continue for long. The change is imminent when SC/ST will on equality with others.

**Why is it that whenever someone talks in favour of SC/ST he is termed as a casteist? Is it not a ploy to keep his voice suppressed?**

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao has said 'I prefer Harjian as a President. Has he been termed as a casteist?

**But there is a lot of differences between saying a thing and doing it.**

That depends on various factors.

**Like**

Well...we know it all. I am told Indirajee tried to make Jagjivan Ram the President. I may be wrong but I am told he refused. I personally feel perhaps he thought he would be able to serve more as a minister and therefore he opted to remain as a minister.

**Is this happening this time also? Let's wait and see.**

## NF LEFTISTS FAIL TO AGREE ON SHARMA

The talks between the National Front and Left Front allies failed to resolve their differences on the candidature of Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma for the President's post. They have, however, decided to continue the dialogue tomorrow in a bid to break the impasse.

The Left Front apparently maintained its proclaimed support for Dr Sharma even though the Prime Minister expressed his difficulty in linking the Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections, as demanded by the left parties..

The West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, met Mr Narasimha Rao this morning on behalf of the CPM to prevail over him to announce at this stage the candidate for the Vice-President's post as well.

Mr. Basu, who spoke briefly to press persons at the end of a hectic day, said the Prime Minister had confessed to him that he had "some difficulties" in announcing the Vice-presidential candidate.

**Talks Inclusive:** As for the two-hour discussion between National Front and Left leaders, Mr Basu's only comment was that it was "inconclusive" because they had "differences". Declining to elaborate on the nature of differences, he said the talks will be resumed tomorrow and hoped there would be "some finality" on the matter.

Soon after his meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr Basu also held extended discussions with other Left leaders where they reviewed their position on the Presidential election in the light of the Prime Ministers remarks.

Subsequently, the meeting of NF leaders was held at the residence of the Janta Dal leader, Mr V. P. Singh's. Among those who participated were the Front chairman, Mr N. T. Rama Rao, the Dal president, Mr S. R. Bommai, Mr Chitta Basu (Forward Bloc), Mr N. E. Balaram and Mr. A.B. Bardhan (CPI). Mr Sitaram Yechury and Mr Prakash Karat (CPM) and Mr M. Padmanabhan (TDP)

Although officially both Mr V. P. Singh and Mr N. T. Rama Rao maintained an optimistic facade, Front sources said that the CPM leaders gave no indication of relenting from their stated position. The CPM has consistently maintained that though it has no quarrel over Dr Sharma's candidature, it is more concerned about the Vice-President's post and has publicly proposed Mr K. R. Narayanan's name for this office. One reason why the CPM has allowed the talks to spill over to the second day is perhaps to leave the Congress guessing and to get a more positive indication from it regarding the Vice-Presidential candidate.

**CPI UPSET:** CPI representatives, it is learnt, were more amenable to the National Front's decision to field its own candidate for the Presidential election.

The CPI is apparently upset with the Congress, decision to delink the election for the resident. It now feels that if the Prime Minister fails to evolve a package, the CPI would be free to exercise its options in the Presidential poll. It is perhaps because of this response that the NF leaders ant to resume their "inconclusive" talks tomorrow after the arrival of the CPI general secretary, Mr Indrajit Gupta, in the Capital.

Despite the obvious divergence of views among the allies, the Front leaders were hopeful that they would be able to hammer out a consensus at tomorrow's meeting. Mr Rama Rao told presspersons that he had, in fact, postponed his departure for Hyderabad because of his confidence about the eventual outcome of the talks. Mr V. P. Singh did not go beyond saying that the talks were not yet over.

The outcome of this dialogue could determine the nature of relationship between the National Front and the Left parties for Front sources also indicated that in case they are not able to persuade the Left to support D. G. G. Swell, their stand would remain unchanged. Although political observers see this as a beginning of a rift between the NF and the Left party leaders from both sides maintained that they would not allow their differences on this issue to mar their alliance. The relationship between the NF and the Left, it was stated, would not be affected for the two would "agree to disagree."

The BJP camp was relatively quiet today because both its top leaders, Mr Murli Manohar Joshi and Mr L. K. Advani, were out of station.

## CHOOSING A NEW PRESIDENT

The selection by the Congress(I) of Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, currently the Vice-President, as its candidate for President is an epoch making event in as much as his chances of success in the eventuality of a contest for the high post are extremely bright given the strength of the party and its allies in the two Houses of

Parliament and the State Assemblies which constitute the electoral college. Dr Sharma's stature in the public life of the country is high by all standards and as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha which goes with the office of the Vice-President he has done and eminently commendable job winning the approbation of members belonging to all parties. For the same reason it was even expected that Dr Sharma would be an automatic consensus candidate although the National Front and the Bharatiya Janta Party are yet to make up their minds. June 24 being the last date for the acceptance of nomination papers there is not much time for the other parties to take a decision and perhaps it would be in the fitness of things if the Congress(I)'s hope that all political parties would "wholeheartedly" support his candidature comes true.

The BJP has taken the stand that both the President and the Vice-President should not be from the ruling party. It has argued that under the present circumstances when the Congress(I) did not have a clear majority on its own in the electoral college it should not insist on choosing candidates for both the posts. The BJP is obviously trying to dictate terms in the belief that its large membership in the Lok Sabha and in the State Assemblies of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and to some extent in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh is going to make things difficult for the Congress(I). Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao had discussion with the Opposition party leaders both in groups and individually and he seems to be in favour of delinking the two posts. Right now he is interested in the Presidential election and he cannot be faulted if so far no consensus could be reached on a common candidature. But he has been assured by the Left Front that it will support Dr Sharma which itself is a big gain for the Congress(I) in electoral terms.

The National Front, on the other hand, is caught in a dilemma ever since Mr. M. P. Singh made the firm declaration that the future President should be one belonging to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe and that if his plea was not excepted he would quit the membership of Lok Sabha. But all his plea was not accepted he would quit the membership of the Lok Sabha. But all the partners of the National Front do not favour selection on the basis of caste for the Presidentship. Not even the Janata Dal which is a major

constituent of the National Front was yet formulated its views in precise terms although the chances of the party supporting Dr Sharma do not appear to be bright. Even so there should not be any serious objection on the part of the Congress(I).

## S. D. SHARMA FILES NOMINATION PAPERS

The Vice-President, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, today filed his nomination papers for the Presidential election as a candidate of the ruling Congress(I).

Two sets of nomination papers signed by Dr Sharma, which included among the proposers the Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, and Chief Ministers of five States, were presented in the afternoon by a galaxy of leaders to the Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Sudershan Aggarwal, who is the Returning Officer for the election.

The papers were handed over between 12-40 p. m. at the Parliament House office of Mr. Aggarwal. Barring Mr. Narasimha Rao and the Defence Minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, virtually the entire Central Cabinet was present on the occasion. As per the procedure, the nomination papers can be handed over by either the candidate of any of the proposers or seconders.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, was the only prominent leader from among the allies of the Congress(I) who was associated with the nomination ceremony. The other three Chief Ministers present on the occasion were all from the Congress(I)-ruled States of Andhra Pradesh, Karanataka and Assam. The whole affair lasted only about half-an-hour.

The first set of papers, in which the proposers included the Prime Minister, several of his Cabinet colleagues, senior Congress(I) leaders and the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Karanataka and Assam, was handed over to the Returning Officer by the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Mr. Arjun Singh.

The Second set of papers, in which the proposers included the Union Welfare Minister, Mr. Sitaram Kesri, and the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. N. Janardhan Reddy, was handed over to the Returning Officer by the former.

Significantly, among the proposers from the ruling party are the Convener of the SC/ST MPs Forum, Mr. Arvind Netam, the former Union Home Minister, Mr. Buta Singh, and the former Chief Minister of Rajasthan. Mr. Jagannath Pahadia, leading lights behind the campaign for a SC/ST President.

All the three leaders were active a the just concluded convention of SC/ST parliamentarians and Legislators which had endorsed the idea for a SC/ST President and appealed to all political parties to favourably consider the demand. Both Mr. Buta Singh and Mr. Arvind Netam were present at the time of submission of the nomination papers of Dr Sharma.

There are 16 proposers and an equal number of secondaries for each set of papers though as per the requirement 10 seconders are sufficient to back the nomination of a candidate. As per the nomination papers, Dr Sharma is a registered voter in the New Delhi parliamentary constituency.

According to sources in the Congress(I), another two sets of nomination paper of Dr Sharma will be submitted on June 22. The last date for filing of nominations is June 24. The nomination papers will come up for scrutiny on June 25 and election if of necessary, would be held on July 13.

**Names of proposers:** The following are details of proposers and seconders for each set of nomination papers of Dr Sharma. the proposers of the first set are Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao. Mr. Arjun Singh. Mr. Maragatham Chandrasekhar, Mr. Sharad Pawar. Mr. B. Shankaranand. Ms. J. Jayalalitha. Mr. P. Shiv Shankar. Mr. K. Vijayabhaskara Reddy. Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad. Mr. Sudhakarrao Naik. Mrs. Sheila Kaul. Mr. Hiteswar Saikia, Mr. P. C. Thomas. Mr. S. Bangarappa and Ms. Sukhbans Kaur.

The seconders of the first set are Mr. Giridhar Gomango. Mr. Rajni Ranjan Sahu. Mr. Rameshwar Thankur, Mr. V. Hanumantha Rao, Mr. K. V. Thangka Balu. Ms. Mamta Banerjee, Mr. Shiv Charan Mathur. Mr. Vinod Kumar. Mr. Manoranjan Bhakta. Mr. Iqbal Singh. Mr. Suresh Pachouri, Ms. Shailja, Mr. M. M. Jacob. Mr. S. K. Singla. Mr. Pawan Kumar Bansal and Mr. Rajeshwar Rao.

The proposers of the second set are Mr. Sitaram Kesri. Mr. Balram Jakhar. Mr. S.B. Chavan. Mr. M. L. Fotedar. Mr. Rajinder

Kumar, Manmohan Singh, Mr. Janardhan Reddy, Mrs. Omem Moyong Deori, Mr. P. Chidambaram, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, Mrs. Nazma Heptullah, Mr. E. Ahmed, Mr. Arvind Netam and Mr. Kalp Nath.

The seconders of the second set are Mr. Mukul Wasnik, Mr. Kedar Nath Singh, Mr. Sukh Ram. Col. Rao Ram Singh Gufaant Azam. Mr. Kamalluddin Ahmed, Mr. D. Satyanarayana. Mr. Jagdish Tytler, Mr. N. K. P. Salve, Mr. Tarun Gogoi. Mr. Dilip Singh Bhuria, Mr. Aslam Sher Khan and Mr. Abrar Ahmed.

## BJP'S OPTIMISM ON PRESIDENTIAL POLL

New Delhi, June 19. Notwithstanding the statements made by some leftist leaders welcoming the candidature of Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma as the Congress(I) nominee for the President's election, the Bharatiya Janata Party has not give up hope about the possibility of the combined Opposition fielding a joint candidate.

The BJP attitude regarding the Presidential election seem to be governed by a conscious effort in the part of its leaders to dispel the impression about their apparent closeness with the Congress(I) in the first 10 months of the Narasimha Rao Government. The BJP leaders are aware that with the divided opposition, it would be very difficult to defeat the Congress(I) candidate. However, they appear ready for the scenario wherein all other opposition parties will back the Congress(I) nominee while the BJP will field of support a different candidate. This will enable them to project the party as the only real opposition in the country. It may be recalled that the BJP was the only major opposition party to field a candidate against Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao in the Nandyal by election.

From indications provided by the senior BJP leaders, the candidate for the Presidential election would only be finalised after a formal response is obtained from the West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, who is to meet the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Mr. L. K. Advani, here on Sunday. The BJP has authorised Mr. Advani, the party chief, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, and the veteran leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, to take a final decision in this regard. Since Mr. Vajpayee is abroad, the party nominee will be decided by Mr. Advani and Dr Joshi.

Close Contest likely: Talking to newspersons today, Dr Joshi said it was not known as yet whether the combined Opposition would put up a joint candidate or there would be more than one Opposition candidate in the fray for the Presidential election, he said because of the transfer of votes, the contest was likely to be close. Asked why his party wanted to contest the election, he said since the combined Opposition was in a majority as compared to the Congress(I). It was the BJP's desire that any person who has the support of more people should get elected.

Meanwhile, sources said the BJP was seriously toying with the idea of fielding its senior leader, Mrs. Vijay Raje Scindia, for the pose of the President. Simultaneously, it was not totally averse to having some sort of an arrangement with the well-known lawyer, Mr. Ram Jethmalani, who has declared that he would be contesting the poll as an independent candidate. Mr. Jethmalani has been a member of the Rajya Sabha on a Janata Dal ticket though he had a very close association with the BJP and the Bharatiya Jan Sangh at one time.

## CONGRESS CONFIDENT

Having set the ball rolling for the Presidential election, the Congress(I) today appeared unruffled by the Opposition criticism of the manner in which it has handled the issue despite its promise to srive for a "consensus".

The party, while watching keenly the activity in the Opposition, gave the impression of quiet confidence with the AICC(I) spokesman Mr. V. N. Gadgil, brushing aside inconvenient queries on the subject. He said there had been no "official reaction" from the Opposition to the candidature of Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma and newspaper reports tended to give conflicting versions.

**Sharp division:** The view in party circles is that the differences with the opposition, especially the Left and the Janata Dal, would be resolved before the Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao's departure for Tokyo on Sunday night. Over the next two days, hectic activity is on the cards with the West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, expected here tomorrow, discussing

the issues first with the Opposition leaders and then with the Prime Minister.

The sharp division within the Opposition has raised hopes in the ruling party that eventually the "show" would go its way. The BJP and the Left were today clearly on different wavelengths and even as the BJP sought to court the Left through very conciliatory public statements, senior Left leaders made it clear that there was no question of having any arrangement with it. The Janta Dal, despite its brave declarations, is also stated to be in favour of keeping its distance with the BJP.

The Left, no doubt, is extremely upset that the Congress(I) "unilaterally" announced the candidature of Dr Sharma ignoring its demand that the names for the President and Vice-President be made known together. But this is not likely to influence the stand it has taken so far—that it is willing to support Dr Sharma provided the Congress(I) "Immediately" indicates whom it has in mind for the Vice-President.

In fact, Left sources indicated that the support for Dr Sharma was not in question at all, and the only grey area was the Vice-Presidency. If the Congress(I) and not reveal its mind before the Prime Minister's departure for Tokyo then the left would feel free to decide its own course. They said unlike the BJP the Left was not insisting on Vice-Presidency going to the Opposition.

**Left 'strategy':** Senior CPI and CPI(M) leaders met his evening to discuss their "strategy" in view of what the CPI leader. Mr. N. E. Balram, described as the "unfortunate" decision of the Congress(I) to delink the posts of the President and the Vice-President. This, he said, had changed the "complexion" of the efforts to arrive at a consensus.

Tomorrow, the Left and the Janata Dal leaders would meet and the hope in Left circles is that the JD would finally be persuaded to go along with the Left Front. The mood in a section of the Janata Dal, however, did not bear out this optimism. The party vice-president, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, who has been in the forefront of the campaign for an SC/ST President, hinted today that the JD might rapport Prof. G. G. Swell for President as initially proposed by Mr. V. P. Singh.

## PROFILE

### A right man for a right job[3]

About Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma playing the role of *Rashtrapati* with fairness, equanimity and an innate sense of responsibility, there is little doubt. In a situation where caste is being touted as the principal qualification for the President's job by some political parties, which earlier expressed abhorrence for such a principle, it can only be said that Dr Sharma is the frontrunner and his being a Brahmin is a non-issue in a secular State. He is, without doubt, the right candidate for the right job and to hold caste against him vitiates the political atmosphere and goes contrary to the democratic grain.

A more non-controversial candidate, who also fits in with the consensual vision, could not be thought of. He is a suave, soft-spoken person and not a doctrinaire protectionist of the establishment. If his experience as Vice-President and Presiding Officer of the Upper House of Parliament is any guide, he has shown that he is not a political free-trader and has taken decision and given rulings unmindful of earning unpopularity with the establishment and has brought to bear a scholarly approach to his work which often requires political maturity, administrative dexterity and a secular vision that is not blurred by sectarian and caste issues.

A more experienced administrator, seasoned politician and erudite scholar is difficult to find. Whether in his role as politician or administrator he has brought to bear a scholarly approach without taking recourse to tricks masters of the art of politics often play, or use methods which could be questioned later. From the world of political skulduggery and intrigue, Dr Sharma has kept aloof. He did not side with the Congress syndicate in 1969 when it decided to throw out Indira Gandhi nor did he join the chorus of abuse which Congressmen heaped upon Jayaprakash Narayan who was leading a movement which led to toppling of Mrs Indira Gandhi's Government. His correct behaviour and responses have helped enhance his stature compelling impatient Congressmen sometimes to listen to his counsel of patience and probity in dealing with unconvenient political situations.

He has been a teacher, Chief Minister, Union Cabinet Minister, Congress President, Governor, Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and Vice-President during his active career spanning half a century. After obtaining his Doctorate in Law from Cambridge he taught law there. He was called to the Bar from Lincoln's Inn and was later a fellow at the Harvard Law School.

Born in 1918 at Bhopal. Dr Sharma had a brilliant academic career. After a brief stint at teaching, he took to politics as fish taken to water, participated in the Quit India Movement and courted imprisonment in the erstwhile Bhopal State. He went through the mill; joining the Congress Party in 1950 and soon rose to the position of Chief Minister of the erstwhile State, an office which he occupied for four years up to 1956. The State's merger with the larger Madhya Pradesh opened up greater opportunities for him. His dedication and hardword was rewarded with such positions as general secretary of the Congress, member of the Working Committee for nearly two decades and he ultimately adorned the office of Congress president for three years up to 1974.

During Dr Sharma's tenure as Congress president, which was eventful in many ways, this scribe spent countless hours with him over tea and sweets, discussing not the state of the Congress or the gathering political storm but being treated to scholarly discourses on evolution of Indian polity, the disastrous links between religion and politics that partitioned the country, criminal jurisprudence, the decline in standards of political behaviour, misinterpretation of the secular Constitution to mean unbridled freedom to preach religious bigotry and hatred, economic planning to benefit the deprived sections and the need for institutional arrangements to ensure speedy justice to economically vulnerable sections.

While discharging his functions as party president, he often tried to discipline partymen who thought of adopting shortcuts to power. Even though he did not always concur with set of Indira Gandhi's advisors, the late Prime Minister gave him tremendous respect. He was a Minister in her Cabinet till 1977 and when the Congress Party returned to power he had a stint as Governor of several States.

His first challenging assignment was to apply the healing touch in Andhra Pradesh where he was called upon to reinstal Mr N. T. Rama Rao a Chief Minister after disgraceful exit of Governor Ram Lal, who had appointed a rootless political adventurer, Bhaskara Rao, as Chief Minister. To this day, N. T. Rama Rao retains a soft corner for Dr Sharma.

The next challenge came in Punjab where also he was called upon to apply balm on wounded feelings in the wake of Operation Bluestar. Although he offered prayers at the Golden Temple and had the metal detectors from the Raj Bhavan entrance removed to ensure easier access to the public, he did not have much time on his hands to make an impact. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate from articulating the demand for transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab as a starting point of a dialogue with the agitated elements. But he had to suddenly leave Punjab and take up an assignment in Maharashtra which also he did not complete as the call of duty brought him to the Capital as Vice-President.

He has kept himself aloof from inner-party wranglings. He was not allowed issues to deteriorate to a point where battlelines would be drawn in the House. His conduct of proceedings of the Rajya Sabha brought out the best in him and his experience and familiarity with all members came in handy while ensuring orderly conduct. He displays a sense of humour to defuse situations but shows firmness while putting down irrepressible members who disturb the proceedings and hijack democracy. While he has earned respect or his impartial rulings, it is Congressmen sometimes who whisper about his allegedly brittle temper. He will not listen to the unreasonable ones. So annoyed was he with the obstructive tactics of the "shouting brigade" on one occasion that he took offence at being insulted and refused to preside over the House till the errant members apologised in person.

Dr Sharma's brilliant academic record with scores of degrees from Indian and foreign universities has helped assess the Indian scene in a broader perspective and his comments often are interspersed with apt quotations from many languages.

In his present capacity he has watched the performance of four Prime Ministers—Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Mr Chandra Shekhar, Mr V. P.

Singh and Mr Narasimha Rao—and all of them held him in high esteem. There never has been any doubt about his personal integrity and his political and administrative record spanning half a century is without blemish. He lives austerely but is a good host. He has also done a stint as journalist and edited the Lucknow Law Journal, Ilm-i-Noor (Urdu), Jyoti (Hindi) and the Congress party journal "Socialist India".

His record as a sportsman and athlete, excelling in rowing and swimming, has stood him in good stead and he keeps fit. He has retained his foundness for poetry, classical Indian music and dance and very often treats himself to Beethovan and Mozart. He is a man of experience and many accomplishments; the nation is safe in his hands.

## JOINT OPPOSITION NOMINEE MOVE A NON-STARTER

### Left to back Sharma

The National Front Left—Front—alliance today failed to reach an agreement on the choice of a Presidential candidate with the CPI-M leader Jyoti Basu restating his commitment to support Congress nominee Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma and the NF projecting Prof. Sell's candidature.

At the end of a 90-minute meeting between the two fronts, while Mr. V. P. Singh only said that "talks are inconclusive, they will continue". Mr Basu after a second brief meeting of his Left Front allies, announced that by tomorrow the talks would come to a "finality". He refused to elaborate.

However, Mr Basu admitted that he had told Prime Minister Narasimha Rao this morning that the Left parties were prepared to support Dr Sharma. Mr Basu also said that he had wanted the Prime Minister to discuss the name of the Vice-Presidential candidate but Mr Rao had told him that there was "some difficulty" in that.

The CPI-M leader said that the Left Front had a name for the Vice-President but did not disclose it.

From the way the Left Front and National Front leaders tries to keep the lid on the talks among them and the cryptic one line

replies, it was obvious that while the Left Front was prepared to commit itself for Dr Sharma it would not do so unless the Prime Minister gave a counter commitment in regard to Vice-Presidential candidate. Mr Rao on his part was not prepared to make that commitment. And as he levels tonight for Tokyo, the stalemate would have to be resolved before midnight.

If Mr Basu does not get a commitment from Mr Rao on the Vice-Presidential candidate the CPI-M will have problems in taking the other members of the Left Front with it on the issue of supporting Dr Sharma. This crack in the Left Front was visible despite Forward Bloc leader Chitta Basu's firm declaration after the two meetings the Left Front had today that there were no differences among the Front partners. Mr Basu is reportedly wanting the Prime Minister to offer the Vice-President's post to a SC candidate.

Meanwhile, restating the BJP's stand on the candidature of Prof. G. G. Swell, party vice-president Krishan Lal Sharma said that "a situation had arisen where the Opposition would have to evolve a consensus and this consensus approach seemed to be strongly in favour of former Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha (Prof. Swell).

Mr Sharma referred to the collapse of the consensus efforts between the ruling party and Opposition on the Presidential candidate due to the Prime Minister wanting both the posts for his partymen.

Senior BJP leader L.K. Advani who is out of town would be meeting Mr Basu tomorrow morning. Only if by then the NF-LF resolve their differences would there be any chance of a common candidate. Otherwise, the BJP is expected to take a decision by itself of fielding a different candidate on its own or keeping out of the Presidential poll, on the plea that the ruling party had vitiated the environment for a consensus candidate.

Both the LF and NF camps were busy since morning having their own meetings or informal consultations. The central figure was Mr Jyoti Basu who, ever since his arrival last night, had plunged into a series of consultations. This morning he met Mr Narasimha Rao to convey to the Prime Minister the Left Front's readiness to support Dr Sharma.

The National Front and the Left Front met together in the afternoon. Present were, among others, Mr. V. P. Singh, Mr. N. T. Rama Rao, Mr. S. R. Bommai and Mr M. Padmanabham from the National Front and Mr Jyoti Basu and Mr Prakash Karat (CPI-M) Mr. A. B. Bardhan and Mr N. E. Balram (CPI), Mr Chitta Basu (Forward Bloc) and Mr Tridib Chaudhury (RSP).

CPI-M general secretary Har Kishan Singh Surjeet is out of the country.

The Left Front's stand in favour of the Congress candidate came in for strong criticism from the Indian People's Front. IPF general secretary Depankar Bhattacharaya characterised the CPI-M stand as "most unfortunate" and wanted the Left to build on the success of the recent industrial strike to channel the "growing mass disillusionment with the Narasimha Rao Government towards a popular democratic assertion."

The IPF wanted the Left Parties to reconsider their stand on this "vital political question".

The DMK chief and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has said that his party would support the National Front's choice for the Presidentships.

**Quit Demand:** The Janata Dal today demanded that Dr S. D. Sharma should resign as Vice-President after filing his nomination for the Presidentship.

In a memorandum submitted to Rajya Sabha Secretary General and Returning Office for he Presidential Election Sudarshan Agarwal, Janata Dal Deputy Chief Whip in Parliament Mohan Singh recalled that in 1969 Mr V. V. Giri had resigned as Vice-President in a dignified manner immediately after filing his nomination papers for the office of President.

The Janata Dal leader also accused Dr Sharma of misusing the official telephone and machinery for his Presidential campaign stating that he had "confirmed information about this". Mr Mohan Singh urged Mr Agarwal to stop misuse of official machinery by Dr Sharma and said "if you are unable to do this (then) please cancel his nomination".

Mr Mohan Singh referred to a report that he (Mr Agarwal) was to retire on June 30 and Dr Sharma, as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, had extended his service but later withdrew his own order, "It is sad, improper and immoral," he said.

PM Meets Sharma: Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao today called on Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma and apprised him of the discussions he has been having with the opposition leaders on the question of support to the Congress Presidential candidate.

Mr Rao, who today completed one year in office, was with Dr Sharma, and apprised him of the discussions he has been having with the opposition leaders on the question of support to the Congress Presidential candidate.

Mr Rao, who today completed one year in office, was with Dr Sharma, the Congress Presidential candidate, for half an hour. This was Mr Rao's third meeting with Dr Sharma in the past few days. The Prime Minister seems assured of Left Front's support for Dr Sharma's candidature.

The Prime Minister will be away in Japan for four days and will return here on June 26.

Samajwadi Janata Party's General-Secretary, Satya Prakash Malviya, MP, welcomed the Congress decision to field Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma for the country's highest post. He appealed to all the political parties and members of the electoral college to facilitate the "unanimous election" of Dr Sharma.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam President M. Karunanidhi today said his party would support the candidature of Prof. G. G. Swell in the Presidential election, reports UNI.

The Janata Dal, a constituent of the National Front, had proposed Prof. Swell, former Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha, as an independent candidate and said it would take a final decision after consulting other constituents of the National Front.

The DMK is constituents of the Front.

Talking to newsmen here, Mr. Karunanidhi said the DMK executive would meet in Madras on June 23 to decide on the future curse of action on the Cauvery issue.

## CONGRESS CONFIDENT OF SHARMA'S WIN

Despite opposition from the Bharatiya Janata Party and the National Front, including the Janata Dal, the Congress is confident that it can get its Presidential candidate elected without much difficulty.

The Congress party commands over five lakh votes in the electoral college of 10.89 lakh votes. The National Front and Left Parties combine accounts for about 2.7 lakh votes and the BJP and its allies about 2.3 lakh votes.

Only a candidate of the combined opposition can hope to defeat the Congress nominee, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, in the next month's Presidential election but with a slight margin.

At present, there appears to be a division among the National Front and the Left parties combine with the constituents of the Left parties taking a stand against the Janata Dal's move of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe nominee as the next President.

The Left parties have generally welcomed the candidature of Dr Sharma but are reportedly unhappy with ruling party about "delinking the issue of the Vice-President's election from the Presidential poll."

The Left parties—the CPI-M, the CPI, the RSP, the Forward Block—account for about 1.05 lakh votes. The Left parties have about 70 members in Parliament and run a Government in West Bengal, led by the CPI-M. In Kerala and Tripura, they are the dominant opposition parties.

The BJP, which is also sore with the Congress on the issue of not leaving the Vice-President's past for the Opposition, is considering to field its own candidate for the Presidential poll, if it gets support from other parties.

Political "pundits" see little possibility of the BJP getting support from either from the Left parties or the National Front, both of whom had declared that they would have nothing to do with the BJP politically.

There will be about 30,000 votes belonging to those in the category of "others and independents" whose role will count in case of keen contest.

A third nomination in favour of Dr Sharma was filed yesterday afternoon by the members of Parliament and MLAs belonging to some non-Congress parties. While 11 members proposed the name of Dr Sharma, 11 others seconded his candidature. The signatories belonged to the Samajwadi Janata Party, the Janata Dal-A, the Telugu Desam, the Manipur People's Party and the Nagaland People's Council.

Proposers included former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, Janata Dal-A leader Ajit Singh, Mr P. Upendra, formerly of the Telugu Desam, and the seconders included Mr Y. Yaima Singh, MP, of the Manipur People's Party, Mr H. D. Devegowda (SJP), Mr Imchalemba (Nagaland People's Council) and Mr. Dr K. V. R. Chowdhary (Telugu Desam).

Besides these non-Congress parties, the Haryana Vikas Party, headed by former State Chief Minister Banarsi Lal has also extended full support to the candidature of Dr Sharma. The HVP has one member in the Lok Sabha and 12 legislators in the Haryana Assembly.

The Sikkim Sangram Parishad has also announced its support to Dr Sharma for the Presidential election.

Support from all these non-Congress cannot on its own win the election.

**PM Plea for support to Cong nominee**

Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao today appealed to all political paties to support the candidature of Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma for the President's post and assured them that a nominee from the weaker sections would be considered for the Vice-President's office.

In a statement shortly before leaving for Tokyo, Mr Rao asked opposition parties to rise to the occasion in larger national interest and support Dr Sharma.

The Prime Minister said it would be "improper" and in any case "premature" to discuss names for the Vice-President's office before the vacancy actually arose.

"Among the suggestions received *inter alia*, in regard to the post of the Vice-President was one that a candidate from the weaker

sections, including minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should be considered," he said.

"While holding consultations, the Congress will naturally take these useful suggestions into consideration", Mr Rao said.

Mr L. K. Advani, Prof. G. G. Swell and Mr Murli Manohar Joshi at a meeting of senior BJP leaders held in New Delhi on Monday.

## SC CANDIDATE DEMAND NOT CASTEIST: SWELL

New Delhi, June 22 (PTI): The move to have a scheduled caste or scheduled tribe candidate for the country's presidentship is not casteist, says Prof George Gilber Swell, the Presidential candidate backed by the National Front and the BJP.

"I do no think it is a casteist demand because the scheduled castes and tribes have been oppressed throughtout the centuries. They have been deprived. Therefore, to ask for a rightful place in the country is not casteist," Prof Swell told PTI in an interview tonight.

The 68-year-old Christian tribal from Meghalaya is likely to fill his nomination papers tomorrow for the July 13 presidential elections as an independent candidate.

A former Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha (1969-77), Prof Swell said he expected S.C./S.T. members (of the electoral college), belonging to different political parties would favour his candidature.

Prof. Swell expressed his happiness that the National Front and the BJP had supported his candidature, although the first move was by the leaders from the northeast.

## BJP BACKS SWELL AS NF-LF DIFFERENCES PERSIST

While the BJP today announced its support for the candidature of Prof. G. G. Swell for presidentship, the National Front and the Left parties failed to arrive at a joint decision after daylong talks.

Announcing his party's decision at a news conference, the BJP president, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, described Dr Swell as a "non-

Congress candidate" and claimed that the National Front and the Janata Dal, too, had agreed to support him.

According to him, the BJP leader, Mr L. K. Advani, had spoken to the Front Chairman, Mr N T Rama Rao, on Saturday and he had given his approval of Dr Swell's candidature. Similarly, he said, BJP leaders had also been in touch with the Dal President, Mr S R Bommai, who had said that he was discussing the matter with his party members. Mr Rama Rao, when confronted by newspersons admitted that he had a telephonic talk with Mr Advani, but refused to say anything more. The Dal spokesman, Mr Hari Kishore Singh, feigned ignorance when questioned about Mr Bommai's talk with Mr Advani.

**Firm Decision**: The BJP's decision to support Dr Swell was taken at a meeting of senior party leaders. Dr Swell was also present. According to Dr Joshi, the party was of the opinion that the post of the President and Vice-President should not go to the ruling party. If the entire opposition joined hands on this issue, the total number of vote polled by there candidate would be more than that of the Congress.

BJP sources said Dr Swell was likely to fill his nomination papers tomorrow.

Even as the BJP came out with a firm decision on the presidential election. the other opposition parties—the NF and the Left parties—appeared to be in a state of flux even after day-long hectic parleys. The inconclusive discussions between the Front and Left leaders continued for the second day today, but failed to yield any result, Officially, however, the Dal spokesman, Mr Singh, maintained that the "differences were narrowing in positive way."

Among those who participated in today's meeting were Mr V. P. Singh and Mr Bommai (Janta Dal), Mr N. T. Rama Rao, Mr Indrajit Gupta, Mr Chaturanan Mishra and Mr N. E. Balram (CPI), Mr Prakash Karat, Mr Sitaram Yechury and Mr E. Balanandan (CPM) and Mr M Padmanabhan (TDP).

**CPM Unhappy:** Sources said several options were considered at these deliberations though the two sides stuck to their positions. Among the various alternatives thrown up were that the Front and

Left parties vote for Dr S. D. Sharma but under protest, the second being that the opposition field its own candidate and the third that he two side boycott the presidential election. The sources also said that though the CPM is distinctly unhappy over the fact that the Prime Minister had made no public commitment on the vice-presidential candidate, it was still inclined to vote for Dr Sharma. The CPI, for its part, appeared more agreeable to the suggestion that the opposition field a candidate, though the party sources said the Left parties would take a joint stand on the issue.

## NF, BJP FİLE NOMINATIONS FOR SWELL

The National Front and the BJP today filled two separate sets of nomination papers for Prof. G. G. Swell as an independent candidate for the July 13 Presidential election.

The Dal leader and former Prime Minister, Mr. V. P. Singh, handed over the nomination papers to the returning officer: Mr. Sudarshan Aggarwal, on behalf of the National Front.

Besides Mr. V. P. Singh,the nomination was proposed by Mr. S. Jaipal Reddy, Mr. M. A. A. Fatmi, Mr. Rabi Ray, Mrs. Kamla Sinha, Mr. S. P. Yadav. Mr. D. P. Yadav and Mr. Hari Kishore Singh (Janata Dal) and Mr. M. Padmanabhan (TDP).

It was seconded, among others, by Dr D. N. Tulasi Reddy and Mr. Mohammad Khalilur Rehman (TDP), Mr. Bapu Kaldate, Mr. Mohammad Afzal, Mrs. Saroj Dubey and Mr. Krishna Kumar Singh (Janata Dal).

From the BJP, Dr Swell's nomination was proposed by Mr. L. K. Advani, Mr. Sikander Bhakt and Mr. K. L. Sharma.

**Conscience Vote:** Later at his press briefing, the Dal spokesman, Mr. Hari Kishore Singh, said his party and the NF had responded to the call of the all-party Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes Forum, by supporting a Scheduled Tribe candidate for the President's post.

"The ball was now in its court", he said.

Asked if it meant an appeal for a conscience vote, Mr. Singh did not elaborate but reiterated that since the Janta Dal leadership had responded to the Forum's appeal for a SC/ST Presidential

candidate, it was now for the members of the Forum to decide their next course of action.

He didn't think that by supporting Dr Swell, the Dal would be inviting the charge that it was colluding with the BJP. The Janata Dal had levelled such an allegation against the Congress after the elections of the Lok Sabha speaker and the Deputy Speaker. Dr Swell, according to him, was an independent candidate, whose name of the Presidential election was first mooted by the Dal leader, Mr. V. P. Singh, "If others are also extending support to him, how can we object," reasoned Mr. Singh.

About the possibility of the NF and the Left parties fielding a common candidate for the Vice-President's post, Mr. Singh said it was too early to decide as only preliminary discussions had taken place so far.

**Farce of Consensus:** Speaking to newsmen after filing Prof. Swell's nomination papers on behalf of the BJP the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Mr L. K. Advani, said the candidature of Prof. Swell is a token of people's disenchantment with the Narasimha Rao government and the Congress mishandling of national affairs.

Mr. Advani said by fielding an opposition candidate they had exposed the "farce of consensus" that the Congress tried to project in respect of the Presidential poll. He said the BJP's response from the very outset had been that it was for a consensus on the office of the President and the Vice-President.

The Congress should have accepted the fact that for the first time in 45 years it is in minority in the electoral college. So if a consensus was to be evolved, the ruling party should have discuss both the posts and conceded one to the Opposition.

The BJP Vice-President Mr. K. L. Sharma, said with the filing of the nomination papers of Prof. Swell, the Congress move to grab both the posts had been foiled. He said, "it was also an opportunity for the Opposition to expose the failures of the Congress."

Criticising the CPM for "backstabbing" the Opposition, Mr Sharma said: "Now that party will be hard put to explain its deal with the Congress."

He said the BJP would now not allow the Vice-President's post also to go uncontested.

In all, 86 sets of nominations were filed on behalf of the candidates, add PTI.

The Congress filed a fourth set of papers for Dr Sharma today. Besides some Union Ministers like Mr. Kamalnath, Mrs. Margaret Alva and Ms Girija Vyas being among the proposers, representatives of non-Congress parties, like Congress (S) and the Sikkim Sangram Parishad, proposed the name of the Congress nominee.

The nominations will be scrutinised tomorrow. The last date of withdrawals is June 27.

Two chief Ministers, Mr Bhajan Lal of Haryana and Mr Beant Singh of Punjab, were also among the proposers for Dr Sharma's candidature. The former Haryana Chief Minister, Mr Bansilal, who is the chief of the Haryana Vikas Parishad (HVP). also support the candidature of Dr Sharma by being one among the proposers.

Mr Ram Jethmalani, MP, filed his fourth set of nomination papers as an independent candidate.

## TIWARI ASSAILS OPPOSITION STAND

The former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mr. N. D. Tiwari, today said it was wrong for the opposition to correlate the posts of the President and the Vice-President as both the posts were separate and the election procedure was different for each.

Mr Tiwari, who returned from the US last night, said it would have been better had the opposition agreed on the candidature of Dr S. D. Sharma as a consensus candidate. He said the selection of Dr Sharma for the post of the President was the right choice under the present situation in the country.

Mr Tiwari said he would tour all the districts of U.P. to strengthen the party in the State. He, however, did not see anything wrong the Congress leaders from other states visiting U.P. and addressing rallies and welcomed them all to tour the state in the interest of the party.

Appreciating the new economic policies of the government, Mr Tiwari wanted liberal policies to be introduced in the public sector. He favoured liberal policies to the exit policy.

## RSP NOT TO BACK SHARMA

Fissures developed in the Left Front on the issue of support to the Presidential nominee with the RSP deciding to abstain from voting and the CPI and the Forward Bloc deferring decisions till later.

Since the RSP was fighting against the government's economic and industrial policies, it would not be possible for them to vote for the Congress candidate, the RSP national executive member, Mr. Sushil Bhatacharya, said.

The RSP has two members in the Rajya Sabha and four in the Lok Sabha, besides eight MLA's in West Bengal, two each in the Tripura and Kerala assemblies.

## POLITICAL COMMENTARY

### Formal Contest Turns Bizarre

To the extent anything in human affairs can be certain, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma's election as the next President surely is— especially after the CPM's categorical reiteration of its decision to vote for him despite frantic and prolonged efforts by Mr. V. P. Singh and his cohorts to dissuade it from doing so.

Since some other opposition groups, such as the Samajwadi Janata Party of Mr Chandra Shekhar, the break-away Ajit Singh faction of the Janata Dal, a splinter of the Telugu Desam and so on, have already pledged their support to Dr Sharma to the extent of filing his nomination papers, the Congress party's lack of a clear majority in the electoral college does not matter at all. Nor will any difference be made to this situation irrespective of what the CPI eventually chooses to do.

There will, of course, be a contest between Dr Sharma and Mr G.G. Swell, a veteran parliamentarian from the north-east. But not only is its outcome a foregone conclusion but the contest itself,

which could have had symbolic value in different circumstances, has turned into something rather bizarre. It does say something for Mr Swell's unenviable position that he is being sponsored as a Presidential candidate by two major opposition parties—the BJP and the Janata Dal-led National Front—each of which is screaming that it has "nothing whatever" to do with the other! The exact sequence of events leading to this state of affairs is even more laughable.

**Swell's Name**

Mr Swell's name as a possible Presidential candidate was first floated, along with several others, by the Janata Dal leader and former Prime Minister, Mr V.P. Singh, as part of his crusade to see to it that the next incumbent of the Rashtrapati Bhavan came from the ranks of only the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes or the "SC/ST", which has become a catchphrase in this abbreviation-addicted country even though it bewilders even the best-informed foreign student of Indian affairs. not content with his vehement demand, Mr. V. P. Singh also issued thee ultimatum that if his party to put up a SC/ST candidate for the presidency he would resign his seat in Lok Sabha. To nobody's surprise, except perhaps his own, this caused dismay even within his own ranks. His "natural allies", the Leftists, were appalled. The parting of the ways between him and the CPM, the largest constituent of the Left Front, over this issue is a testimony to the strength of the Marxists' feelings.

However, while Mr. V. P. Singh was busy cajoling his extreme views, the BJP, which he professes to abhor, neatly stole his clothes by adopting Mr Swell as its candidates. The BJP is not alone in blaming the present somewhat messy situation on Mr. P. V. Narsimha Rao and in denouncing him for having "sabotaged" a consensus in favour of Dr Sharma which could have been easily obtained. This sentiment is shared by the CPM too. Nor is the criticism of the Prime Minister entirely without substance.

**No Surprise**

Notwithstanding the fundamentalist position taken by Mr. V. P. Singh, a consensus on Dr Sharma could have built up almost

immediately if the Prime Minister had simultaneously agreed to name for the Vice-President's post some suitable Harijan or Girijan candidate. It was no surprise that Mr. K. R. Narayanan's name, when mentioned in this connection, proved to be instantly and deservedly popular. In fact, at one time it appeared that the Sharma-Narayanan slate would go through like a shot. But Mr. Narasimha Rao had his reasons to "de-link" the presidential and vice-presidential elections.

His explanation that there could not be any nomination for the post of Vice-President until it was actually vacant is, of course, specious. When Dr Radhakrishnan was "requested" by the Congress to accept the presidency, then about to be vacated by Dr Rajendra Prasad, it was simultaneously announced that Dr Zakir Husain would be the candidate for the vice-presidency. The same procedure was followed when the time came for Zakir Sahib to move to the Rashtrapati Bhavan and Mr. V. V. Giri was chosen to replace him as Vice-President.

Cutting out the cackle, the three main factors which influenced the Prime Ministers' decision can be easily identified. First, he saw no reason to rescue Mr. V. P. Singh from the corner into which the latter has painted himself. Secondly, there seems to be some difference of opinion within the Congress party over who the Vice President of the future should be. Opposition to Mr. Narayanan is known to have come, strangely, from his own home state of Kerala. Among others whose candidature is being pressed seriously is Dr P. C. Alexander with the impressive record of having been principal secretary to Indira Gandhi during her second innings as Prime Minister, High Commissioner in London and Governor of Tamil Nadu behind him. Dr Alexander is a Christian and this minority community has never before held either of the two top posts.

Thirdly, and no less importantly, Mr Narasimha Rao wanted to bypass the BJP's attempt to get the post of Vice-President for one of its own on the plea that both the exalted offices must not go to the Congress party?

What are going to be the consequences of all this for the evolution of Indian politics at this difficult juncture? Quite clearly, the level of contention in the country is bound to rise.

To have ended the painfully prolonged confrontation and replaced it by an ambience of conciliation and consensus has been a major achievement of Mr Narasimha Rao during his first year in power. But now he has allowed the pendulum to swing in the reverse direction. The beautiful friendship between him and the BJP—which used to earn him some derision—has ended. But it is only fair to add that the snafu over the Presidential poll is not the cause of this estrangement but a consequence.

BJP leaders make no bones about their belief that the Prime Minister was a "different man" than they had known from the moment the Congress party's strength in the Lok Sabha went up by 12 as a result of the Punjab elections. His subsequent frontal attack on the BJP at Tirupati, applauded by the CPM and others, was the last straw on the BJP's escalating belligerency over Tin Bigha, an issue with a vital bearing on India's relations with Bangladesh, is a cause for grave concern.

**VP's Plight**

about the plight of Mr V. P. Singh after all his tantrums, the less said the better. Evidently, he learnt nothing from his misadventure of Mandalisation. But he might profit from his present contretemps if he would only ponder what his CPM allies are saying. They have supported Dr Sharma because, in their view as in that of most people, in the prevailing circumstances he alone, of available candidates, has the statue, sagacity and experience to be head of state. They want the next Vice-President to be a Harijan or Girijan but only if he or she had the "requisite stature".

This is sound sense compared with the populist nonsense that birth in an SC/ST family be made the be-all an end-all of electing the President of the World's second most populous nation.

## PM'S CANDIDATE

### Cong(I)'s nomination of S. D. Sharma for the presidential poll was only a formality

The Congress (I), rather its chief had decided on the party's candidate for the presidential poll quite some time ago. But neither

V. P. Narasimha Rao nor his aides were willing to say so. Not that it was difficult to hazard a guess. For many in the ruling party and in the opposition. Vice-President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma was the obvious and even ideal candidate for the country's top job.

Yet PV and Co. kept up a charade: of consensus consultations among themselves and with the opposition. Yes. they did hold talks, but the idea was not to arrive at a consensus but to work out the vote calculations. And they were also stalling for time, to get a comprehensive feedback from the Intelligence Bureau and it subsidiaries in the states on the mood in the electoral college.

Remarkably. three party heavy-weights—Human Resources Minister Arjun Singh, Defence Minister Sharad Pawar and Home Minister S.B. Chawan—were not fully involved in the strategy sessions. At best they attended the sessions only to concur with PV's stratagems. When the meeting of the Union Council of Ministers was summoned at North Block around 6 p. m. on June 18. little did anybody know that on the agenda was Sharma's candidature. Of course, all knew his nomination was only a formality.

What surprised political pundits was the timing of the announcement. Hardly two hours earlier on the same day party spokesman V. N. Godgil parried all questions on the subject at his regular press briefing. Gadgil. a special invite to the Congress Working Committee. who was headed for the cabinet meeting again as a special invite. would only say that the name would be announced before June 22.

Obviously, he knew what was in the offing but was not telling. Perhaps the high command wanted to catch the BJP and the Janata Dal off-guard. The idea may have been to kill two birds with one stone. Delay the announcement till the BJP leaders took off for Jaipur on a fact-finding mission over the Kumher caste carnage. And pre-empt any precipitate action by the Janata Dal national executive scheduled to meet on June 20.

Not that PV was unduly worried about Janata Dal all-in-all V. P. Singh's seemingly intractable stand that a Harijan should be the next President or the BJP's belligerent demand that the Vice-President should be from the Opposition if the President is a Congress (I) man.

PV knew that for all VP's pro-Harjian sentiments, he did not have the full backing of his party. And the BJP leadership was not exactly united on the issues—it was known that Advani was all for a consensus candidate while party president Dr Murli Manohar Joshi was intent on challenging the Congress (I).

And the left and the BJP were not just about to forget their mutual contempt. Not even after the Congress (I) made what what they charged was a unitlaeral nomination. So, as the Opposition stood divided, PV made what could be a winning move.

The shrewd political player that he is, PV had initiated consultations with the Oposition in the last week of May. He had huddled with Singh, BJP stalwart L. K. Advani, Samajwadi Janata Party chief Chandra Shekhar (Shekhar later endorsed Sharma as "the fittest choice") and the CPI(M)'s Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Jyoti Basu. But, as is his wont, he would not divulge what transpired at the meetings. May be the studied silence too was a ploy to keep the Opposition guessing even as he quietly assessed Sharma's chances as a Congress (I) candidate.

PV really got to work on the subject on June 9, the day after the CWC authorised him in his capacity as the party chief to decide on the candidate—read nominate Sharma as the desired, PV, accompanied by Arjun Singh, called on Sharma to apprise him of the decision.

(Ironically, one of the reasons why PV was so keen on nominating Sharma was reportedly to stymie the prime ministerial ambitions of Singh. If Sharma becomes President, Singh cannot aspire to be the PM. Logic: If the President is from the north, or rather the cow-belt, the PM will have to be from the south).

Incidentally, the party was to announce Sharma's candidature on the night of June 9. But that was not to be because PV was preoccupied with the biennial Rajya Sabha elections. Instead, PV's political secretary Jitendra Prasad an Union Communications Minister Rajesh Pilot sounded out some opposition leaders over dinner that night. Information so culled was being regularly fed to PV; even when he was away in Rio de Janeiro attending the Earth Summit, cabinet colleagues and aides kept him posted about the latest on the manoeuvres in Delhi over the presidential poll.

Once he returned from Rio, PV had all his close aides on the job of making a final vote 'guesstimate' based on the IB reports and their own findings. Once he was convinced that Sharma could get at least 50 per cent of the votes. VP gave the go-ahead to nominate him. Now there was no stopping the quietly assertive Congress (I) boss. Not even the powerful pitch of the all-party Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Forum of parliamentarians for a Harijan as President would make him change his mind.

But why was PV so keen on nominating a man who, as AICC president, was privy to Indira Gandhi's decision to remove him from the Andhra Pradesh Chief Ministership in 1973? Apparently, they are two of a kind. Once Sharma is ensconconced on the Rashtrapai Bhavan, PV can breathe more easily in his percarious perch on the PM's gaddi. Sharma, a scholar, statesman and an astute political is not given to hasty actions. With him as the guiding star, PV may be hoping to steer the Indian ship of state out of the troubled waters that it had been marooned in for long.

## CHOICE OF PRESIDENT RUFFLES MANY PARTIES

The run-up to the forthcoming presidential elections has caused a rift not merely among the various constituents of the Left Front and the National Front, but even within some of the individual parties in the fray.

The CPI leader, Mr Indrajit Gupta, is the latest to give vent to his displeasure over the manner in which both the CPI's ally, the CPM as well as its antagonist, the Congress, have taken unilateral decisions without consulting his party.

Snatching a few minutes off from the meeting of the CPI national executive currently on in the Capital, Mr Gupta explained that while the himself feels that "as a person, Shankar Dayal Sharma is the fittest candidate for the post", the decision reached by the national executive could well be otherwise. He doesn't rule out the possibility of abstention, which is what the other Left Front constituent, the RSP, has opted for.

**PM Statement:** According to Mr. Gupta, several members of the CPI were annoyed that the Prime Minister went back on his

earlier statement that the announcement of Dr Sharma's candidature would be by consensus. "Ultimately, he emerged as a Congress candidate. which has upset our members."

Mr. Gupta is equally peeved at the CPM's announcement of support to Dr Sharma without taking other Left allies into confidence. "I know for a fact that Mr Jyoti Basu met the PM before he left for Japan and gave him a private assurance about the selection of an SC/ST candidate for the Vice-President's post. It was probably on that basis that the party had decided to support the candidature of Dr Sharma. Mr Basu could have apprised us of the matter so that we could have taken a united stand", he says.

Moreover, asks Mr Gupta, why could the assurance not have been made public by the PM? Mr Gupta who had a meeting with the Prime Minister today, was also extended the same "private assurance," according to sources.

**VP Strategy:** Mr Gupta is also critical of the JD leader, Mr. V. P. Singh's "confused strategy" for the presidential elections. "One moment the SC/ST question is the supreme consideration for him, at another it is anti-Congressism. And sometimes the two don't fit in with each other." According to him the biggest beneficiary in his whole exercise in the BJP.

He does not, however, go along with the charge levelled by JD general secretary, Mr Rajmohan Gandhi, that "BJP and the JD have acted as if he politics of opposition were synonymous with the politics of opportunism." Mr Gandhi, is among the six JD signatories to a letter addressed to the party president, Mr S. R. Bommai, seeking the right to cast a conscience vote.

Even before June 20, when the national executive of the JD ratified the decision to put up Prof Swell, at the meeting of the JD parliamentary board, senior leaders, on June 12—to which, significantly, Mr. Gandhi was not invited, despite assurances from Mr Bommai—"a resolution endorsing the VP line on presidential election was passed and teamwork with the BJP began," charges Mr Gandhi.

**Pact with BJP Denied:** The JD leader, Mr Madhu Dandavate, however, denies that there was any tacit understanding between the

BJP and the JD. Claiming that the decision to put up Prof Swell as presidential candidate was dictated by a desire to pay homage to the oppressed castes on the occasion of the Ambedkar centenary, he contends that "we cannot prevent any other party, even the BJP, from supporting our candidate."

Although JD leaders like Mr Gandhi credit the CPM with having come out of the farces of flying colours, one cannot but conclude that in is the PM who has proved most wily, and the Congress which has gained the most, by proving once again that opposition unity is but a chimera.

## PRESIDENTIAL INTRIGUE

Yes, there is one daily rooting for V. P. Singh and congratulating him for his stand on the presidential election. "He has prepared the battlefield for social justice. He has changed the very nature of the election for the President by transforming the contest into a confrontation between Brahmin and non-Brahmin forces," says *Viduthuali* (Tamil, Madras), the mouthpiece of the Dravida Kazhagam. But before G. G. Swell concludes that the media is supporting V. P. Singh's bid to install him in Rashtrapati Bhavan, it is worthwhile looking at the views of *Viduthalai* on other issues. This daily supports Tamil nationalism, the LTTE's activities in Tamil Nadu and condemns the "pro-Brahmin forces which control the national Press and New Delhi."

The mainstream Press is not impressed by the Janata Dal's insistence on an SC/ST president. Most political columnists see no merit in the posture of either the ruling Congress or that of the opposition parties. The media is not asking which of the two —S. D. Sharma or G. G. Swell—would make a better President. Neither is there a debate on how effective would an SC/ST president be in ensuring social justice for the oppressed. The attention of the Press is rivetted on the Machiavellian political maneouvres which are going on in New Delhi.

Though the *Deccan Herald*, (Bangalore) accuses the Congress of being "less than sincere" in its conduct in the choice and announcement of its candidate, it is the image of the opposition which has sunk to an all time low. "The tragedy of Indian politics is

that non-Congress parties have never been able to agree on any issue," observes *Rajasthan Patrika* (Hindi, Jaipur)." "If both the National Front and the BJP were eventually going to support Swell, why did they delay their decision for so long? As for N. T. Rama Rao and V.P. Singh — the two leaders have become the laughing stock of the nation...The growing factionalism among the opposition parties has not only reduced the chances of Swell's victory, it has irreparably harmed the credibility of the opposition parties."

The rift between the Janata Dal and the Leftists has been widely commented upon by the Press in West Bengal. The *Anand Bazar Patrika* (Bengali, Calcutta) says that the Leftists lost interest in the Janata Dal once the latter's popularity declined in the Hindi belt. "When V.P. Singh first raised the Mandal slogan, the Left did not sever their ties with the Janata Dal which was hen the most powerful anti-Congress party. Now the situation is different as the CPM has developed a soft corner for the Congress led by Narasimha Rao. The CPM seems to have given up on V. P. Singh."

The pro-Left *Aajkal* (Bengali, Calcutta) is extremely upset a the CPM volte face in supporting the Congress. "The CPM may claim that S. D. Sharma is the right choice, that today the country needs a secular person like him. But we have certain questions to ask the party's leadership. Why has the CPM decided to support Narasimha Rao, who it said earlier, had sold the country to America? Why has Jyoti Basu taken this step when he was aware that it would widen the growing rift between him and his natural ally, V.P. Singh? Perhaps the Chief Minister is concerned about the future of the country. Very commendable indeed. But we wish that he had shown a little more concern for grassroots level workers of his party who have to face the questions of the people."

In contrast the Leftist *Kerala Kaumudi* (Malayalam, Thiruvananthapuram) is quite certain that the CPM has taken the right decision. It recalls Sharma's role as a freedom fighter and is confident that he would always put the county, rather than his party, first: "We have full confidence in Dr Sharma. He will safeguard the interests and the prestige of the nation."

The Press is unanimous in predicting Dr Sharma's victory. There is great deal of confusion as this Presidential election is being

fought neither on partylines nor on the basis of any one major issue. But there is no doubt about the identity of the cat which is going to Rashtrapati Bhawan.

**RIFT IN JD OVER CONSCIENCE VOTE, VP TOUGHENS STAND**

The Janata Dal leader, Mr. V.P. Singh, today demanded the dismissal of the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh for violating the court orders in Ayodhya, and accused the Congress of colluding with the BJP on the issue.

Mr Singh's attack against the BJP and the Congress, is seen as an effort to dispel the impression that the Dal and the BJP have joined hands in the coming presidential election. It comes in the wake of six Dal MPs seeking a conscience vote on the ground that they did not wish to compromise on their secular values by voting for a candidate who is also supported by the BJP.

They had also pointed out that by supporting Prof. G. G. Swell, the Dal and the BJP are now placed in the same camp while other secular forces are on the other side of the political divide.

Mr Singh, who addressed a press conference here, categorically ruled out the exercise of the conscience vote by his party members. He said he had spoken to the Dal MP, Syed Shahabuddin, in this connection and that he would be speaking to the others as well. He expressed confidence that this issue would be sorted out and he "would be able to remove their doubts".

(However the dissident MP's leader, Mohammed Yunus Saleem, predicted even a split in the Dal on the conscience vote issue, PTI adds.)

Mr Shahabuddin and Mr Saleem, who are among the six MPs asking for a conscience vote, told press-persons that their stance remained unchanged despite Mr Singh's attempt to distance himself from the BJP. Mr Shahabuddin said he had an hour-long chat with Mr Singh on the Ayodhya issue and the presidential issue but the discussion was inconclusive.

Mr Saleem, on the other hand, said he felt that the Ayodhya issue should not be linked with the presidential election. He said he

and several others in the party did not agree to the Dal's association with the BJP in the presidential election.

He did not rule out a split in the party if the Dal leadership failed to take a realistic view in this matter, adding that he had been receiving encouraging messages from other party members in response to their open call for a conscience vote.

**Cong Credentials:** In response to the issue raised by the dissident Dal MPs, Mr Singh questioned the secular credentials of the Congress party and said not only did the ruling party allow the *Shilanyas* to be prformed at the disputed site in Ayodhya, but had taken no action against the U. P. government for allowing court orders to be violated.

Mr Singh said that despite all this, the Congress government "had failed to raise even its little finger" at the U.P. government. This, according to him, was proof of the collusion between the BJP and the Congress party.

The Dal leader even went to the extent of demanding the resignation of the central government in case it failed to take action against the Kalyan Singh government.

Defending his party's decision to support a SC/ST candidate in the Presidential election, Mr Singh said that he Dalits, as a social force, have been singularly secular, adding that Prof. Swell's candidature should be evaluated against this background.

He also pointed out that Prof. Swell had been associated with the Dal since the Jan Morcha days and that his party had supported him in the 1989 elections.

He also pointed out that the decision to support a SC/ST candidate was taken by the party's highest decision-making body — the national executive —after considerable debate and that there was no going back on it now.

**Support For SD:** Leaders of various political parties, including the former Prime Minister, Mr Chandra Shekhar, today pledged their support to the Congress candidate, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, PTI adds.

However, the joint press conference called to express support for Dr. Sharma turned out to be a veritable diatribe against Mr V. P. Singh.

Mr Shekhar said, "We should not take their (Mr V. P. Sigh and Telugu Desam leader, Mr. N. T. Rama Rao) views very seriously. We should pity them as they are only social climbers in order to get some immediate political advantage."

He told the Janata Dal (A) leader, Mr Ajit Singh, who was sitting by his side, to forget past and pity him (Mr V. P. singh) as he has some kind of mental malady."

Mr Shekhar said Dr Sharma should be supported because he had been the Vice-President for five years and had conducted himself admirably. "If there had been anybody else equal or higher in stature than Dr Sharma, I would have supported him even if he was from the SC/ST communities."

**Joint Statement:** In a joint statement, the leaders hoped that the Prime Minister and the ruling party would hold fresh consultations on the question of the vice-presidential candidate so that a consensus would emerge and an eminent person, preferably belonging to the weaker section, was elected to the office.

## CPI TO BACK S. D. SHARMA'S CANDIDATURE

The Communist Party of Indian (CPI) today formally announced its support for the candidature of Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma in the July 13 presidential election.

The decision apparently followed an assurance the party claimed to have got from the Prime Minister. P. V. Narasimha Rao. that a suitable Scheduled SC/ST candidate would be considered of the election of Vice-President in August.

The three-day national council of meeting of the party ended today with about 90 per cent members voting in favour of Dr Sharmas candidature. The members were, however, critical of the Prime Minister for delinking the choice of candidates for Presidentship and Vice Presidentship.

The party general secretary, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, told presspersons that out of the 96 council members who took part in the voting over the issue. 73 voted in favour of Dr Sharma. 12 against. and 11 abstained. Only two members voted in favour of Prof G. G. Swell who is being supported by the National Front and the BJP.

The CPM has already made public its support for Dr Sharma's candidature. while the Revolutionary Socialist Party has decided to abstain from voting in the presidential election. The other constituent of the Left Front, the Forward Bloc, is yet to make up its mind in this regard.

**The Dissenters:** Mr Indrajit Gupta pointed out that those of his party leaders who expressed against Dr Sharma's candidature, did so not because of caste considerations, but they were finding it difficult to support him because of the party's opposition to the new economic policies of the Congress government.

Declining to disclose the contents of his talks with the Prime Minister Yesterday, Mr Gupta said on the basis of the talks with Mr. Rao the National Council was hopeful that the party's consistent stand for a "generally acceptable persons from the SC/ST as Vice President will be satisfied."

He said since the commencement of consultations regarding the choice of candidates for the post of President and Vice-President, the CPI, along with other left and democratic parts, had been pressing the Prime Minister to treat the posts as packages without delinking one from the other. "We were also of the firm opinion that one of the two posts would go to a member of the SC/ST communities, and on this basis a consensus should be explored."

He regreted that the Prime minister was opposed to the concept of package and did not seriously work for a consensus with other parties.

Mr. Gupta said his party would support a SC/ST candidate in the Vice -Presidential election only if he has appropriate national stature, and not somebody like Mr. Buta Singh or Mr. S. Shankaranad—the Congress leaders belonging to the SC/ST category.

He also said that considering the onerous functions and duties the President of the republic is required to discharge, Dr Sharma was "Preferable in comparison to Prof. G. G. Swell."

## CONSCIENCE VOTE CRISIS CONTINUES

The turmoil in the Janata Dal over the coming presidential election continue today, despite Mr. Biju Patnaik's support for the line taken by the party to support Prof. G. G. Swell.

Both the dissenting Dal MPs, who are insisting on a conscience vote, and the party president, Mr S. R. Bommai, and Mr. V. P. Singh, met Mr Patnaik separately to convince him about their respective views. Later, both sides claimed that they had been successful in enlisting his support. However, the dissidents insisted that their stand on seeking a conscience vote remained unchanged and asserted that many more Dal members would be joining them in the coming days.

Mr. Patnaik, on his part, is learnt to have ticked off both the parties and later he told the press that he "supports the party line". At the same time, he was dismissive of the controversy that has arisen in the party over going along with BJP in supporting Prof. Swell, stating that it was "much ado about nothing". He, however, felt hat Dr S. D. Sharma already stands elected and now it "was only a game of numbers". But, he has also of the view that all this could have been avoided if the Prime Minister had been emphatic on fielding an SC/ST candidate for the post of Vice-President.

He also revealed that it was a actually Mr V. P. Singh who had first suggested Mr. K. R. Narayanan's name for this office when the Prime Minister had consulted opposition leaders on the issue. Mr Singh, according to him, had pointed out that there were several eligible SC/ST candidates for this post in the Congress itself and had mentioned Mr. Narayana's name.

Asked about the advice he had given to these who were seeking a sonscience vote, Mr Patnaik responded with a counter question. "What is a conscience vote? Nobody is forcing anybody to vote," adding that they do not have to vote if they don't want to. He said the Dal MPs Mr Chimanbhai Mehta and Mr Yunus Saleem, who are among the chief detractors, had met him last night and he had told them this. At the same time, he had asked them not to go public with their grievances.

## POLITICKING TO THE FORE

### Portents of the Presidential Poll

It is strange that the political leadership in this country should have gone about trying to achieve a consensus in respect of next

month's presidential contest. The search for an agreed candidate, presumably a person of stature capable of rising above partisan passions in times of constitutional crisis was based on a premise that our political leaders had the requisite intellectual maturity and vision to realise that the policy was already bitterly divided and that best national interest demanded that a contentious contest for the highest office in the land be avoided. But this was an unrealistic exercise and naturally came to nought.

### Two Things

A consensus could mean only two things. Either the opposition parties spoke with a united voice and proposed a candidate of such overwhelming merit and statue that the Congress and the Prime Minister would have had no difficulty in accepting the choice. This was neither possible for feasible. Or the Congress leadership was willing to come to an understanding with either the BJP or the National Front-Left combine in which in exchange for support for the presidential candidate the ruling party would be open to suggestions from the Opposition on a Vice-Presidential candidate. This, too, was simply not possible given the internal equations in the Congress, notwithstanding the Prime Minister presumed ascendancy in the party's working committee. In any case, either the BJP or the National Front-Left Front combine would have been left crying foul.

Had the opposition parties been able to present a joint front, the presidential contest would have been a very close call for the Congress candidate. This is why the Congress leadership had to go through the motion of exploring the possibility of a consensus candidate. The middle classes and the intelligentsia, tired as they are of the fractiousness that pervades the political scene, were also anxious to avoid another round of unedifying politicking. Could it, then be, that from the very beginning the Congress interest in a consensus candidate was just a ploy to confuse and divide the opposition parties? At least that is the end result, and it is not going to serve the Congress leadership or the polity well in the long run.

To begin with things are not going to be same again between the National Front and the Left Front. Obviously CPM has developed such doubts about the political objectives of the Janata

Dal leadership, especially about Mr. V. P. Singh's judgement and calculations that it would be a while before these two political fronts are able to work together in a meaningful way. Of course, at the state level the NF-LF relationship never really did translate itself into a coherent political force; all that was achieved was that the friendly parties in different states were somewhat better placed to avert the threat of marginalisation.

But at the national level the combine did have a potential, capable of tapping the vast "dispossessed" constituency of backward castes and the minorities. This potential did lend the political system a certain legitimacy it would not have otherwise had. Now with the CPM breaking ranks, and that, too, on the question of Mr V.P. Singh's decidely misguided insistence on a Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe presidential candidate, the whole concept of social justice has been undermined in a fashion that should please both the BJP and a section of the Congress. Of course, it is a measure of the former Prime Minister's credibility that he is stuck with a "casteist" lebel. However, when Mr. Narasimha Rao resorted to the same stratagem at Tirputi to fix Mr Arujun Singh and Mr Sharad Pawar after the Congress Working Committee poll, no one heaped ridicule on him.

This rupture between the Left and the Janta Dal would have been worthwhile if there was any possibility of the Congress-Left meeting of minds getting translated into a meaningful equation beyond the presidential poll. But the CPM is keen to assure one and all that is opposition to the Congress would remain as shrill as ever. All that seems feasible is the remote possibility of a section of the Congress which was otherwise feeling itself increasingly marginalised in the face of the Manmohan Singh Juggernut, finding its voice.

**Congress-Left Ties**

However, the Congress-Left ties are going to go sour sooner than later. After Mr Arjun Singh's emphatic assertion that there was no understanding with the Left Front on the question of Vice-President. Mr Jyoti Basu must be feeling a bit foolish. Though the party now seeks to put its support for Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma on

a principled basis, the fact of the matter is that the CPM allowed itself to be manipulated into thinking that the Congress was amenable to its suggestions for the vice-presidentship especially on Mr K. R. Narayanan's candidature.

While there is certain merit in the CPM argument that it was guided by a desire that the BJP should not be allowed to reach an understanding with the Congress, it does not necessarily follow that the Prime Minister would have been averse to work out an arrangement with Mr. L. K. Advani. For the CPM to support Dr S. D. Sharma amounts to making a virtue of necessity. Jettisoning of omnibus anti-Congress change its spots. By creating a situation in which the Janata Dal and the BJP are seen as appearing on the same side of the fence, the Congress has possibly calculated that it would prompt the minorities, especially in the northern states, to come back to the ruling party. In the process the CPM may also have rather presumptuously hoped to force the Janata Dal to get its internal act together. All that the CPM and the Congress have managed to achieve is to engineer a kind of revolt in the Janata Dal. Six JD MPs have already expressed their unhappiness over the party's support to Professor G. G. Swell. But a split in the Janta Dal, especially in the Hindi belt, would not necessarily help contain the communal forces.

**Ground Realties**

The Congress manoeuvring on the presidential poll is going to leave the BJP pretty sore. The CPM can have the satisfaction to have denied the BJP an opportunity to gain some leverage. But the outcome of the presidential election will not change he ground realities. All that the CPM has achieved is breakdown of the PM-BJP relationship. A political party that has well over a hundred seats in the Lok Sabha ought not be left feeling marginalised. This frustration can heat up the polity once again to a dangerous point.

Above all instead of promoting principled politics, gamesmanship over the presidential poll has degenerated into an invitation to the politics of manipulation. Already the Congress managers are buy procuring the votes of smaller parties like the Samajavadi Janata Party, the Janta Dal (Ajit). Bansi Lal's Haryana Vikas Party, the breakaway Telugu Desam, etc. Again, men like

Mr. Chimnbhai Patel have gained entry in the Congress by threatening to barter away their votes in the presidential elections. If to this we add the entirely unfortunate manner in which money bags and muscle power were used in last week's Rajya Sabha poll to subvert organisational loyalties, the Congress leadership is needlessly creating a situation that will not be conducive to pursuit of purposeful politics.

## ELECTING THE NEXT PRESIDENT THROUGH CONSENSUS?

Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao justifiably felt satisfied with India's performance in the run-up to and during the deliberations at Rio de Janeiro and his talks during stop covers at Madrid on his way, to Lisbon on his return journey from the socalled earth summit. Spain and Portugal are developing counties among the members of the European Community and therefore are better placed to appreciate Indian perceptions on the changes that are taking place in the world and the role that India is playing for democratising international relations.

Although a number of important issues were awaiting his decisions at home he had to get ready for a visit to Japan beginning from 22 June, and in between on 18-19 June a high level US State Department team is visiting New Delhi to pick up the threads of the Indo-US dialogue from where they were left after Foreign Secretary J N Dikshit's visit to Washington a couple of months ago. Although the Prime Minister will not be involved directly in the Indo-US talks, his personal guidance would be needed by the Indian team, headed by External Ministry's Shekhar Gupta because of the sensitive nature of the issue that will come up.

The first decision which the Prime Minister had to take as the choice of the ruling party's candidate for the presidency. Although it is generally believed that the Congress will put up Vice-President Shankar Dayal Sharma and although it is also known that most Congressmen would like him to be elevated to the presidency, he has not yet been formally named because the Prime Minister is trying to built a consensus around his candidature. But just before his departure for the Rio summit when he was expected to announce

Dr Sharma's name, the BJP sabotage the prospects of a national consensus by demanding the vice-presidency for its candidate in lieu of its support to the Congress nominee for presidency.

Not that Prime Minister was unaware of the Shylockian streak in BJP's have the deputy speakership because of the convention that the office should go to the main opposition party. But the BJP treated it as the pound of political flesh it had extracted from the Congress for supporting its candidate for speakership. It was widely believed that in this occasion it would demand vice-presidency as quid pro quo for supporting the Congress candidate for presidency. But in his talks the P V Narasimha Rao on the question of presidency, BJP leader L K Advani has never asked for a price for falling in line with consensus on Dr Sharma's candidature.

Never in his talks with other BJP leaders as well, did the question of vice-presidency come back, Narasimha Rao himself did not raise the issue because he did not want to link presidential election with the election of the vice-president. For one thing, the two highest offices of the state cannot be treated as bargaining counters. For another, the constitution itself treats the two elections as different and has provided for different methods of election and different electoral colleges. While the president is elected by all (except nominated) members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sahba and the state legislatures, and each vote is counted according to a formula based on population, the vice-president is elected by a direct vote of members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Advani, in fact, was conveying his party leadership's decision when he talked to Narasimha Rao on telephone just before the latters's departure for the Rio conference. That is why Narasimha Rao could not announce the Congress choice. Earlier he had talked to the leaders of Left Front who had indicated their support for Dr Sharma's candidature. Narasimha Rao had left it to them to bring the Janata Dal leadership round to their viewpoint. From his experience he knew that the Janata Dal leadership. VP Singh in particular, was the greatest stumbling block in the way of any consensus, and on one occasion he was constrained to say in Parliament that consensus can be arrived at on any issue but without V P Singh.

In the meantime, VP Singh had taken a public stand that the President should come from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Left Front leaders had disassociated themselves from his stand and insisted that the highest office of the state cannot be subjected to the caste/criterion and should go to a person of some standing in public life who is committed to secularism, democracy and other progressive ideas. Because of the firm stand taken by the Left Front. V P Singh modified his stand and said that he had merely expressed his personal views but the Janata Dal's stand was open to the party leadership's decision.

He also assured the Left Front leaders that he would not allow the Dal's alliance with them to be affected by his personal views. To assuage his feelings, the Left Front took the stand that (i) formal convention should be established about a Vice-President succeeding the President on the expiry of his or her term. (ii) under this convention the present Vice-President, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma should succeed the outgoing President R. Venkataraman, and (iii) the next President should be Congress Lok Sabha member from Kerala, K R Narayanan, who belongs to the scheduled castes.

Thus, the Left Front not only linked the election of the next President to the election of Dr Sharma's successors as Vice-President, but also sought to dictate to the Congress who its candidate for vice-presidency should be. But Narasimha Rao did not mind it as there was consensus on Dr Sharma's name. Besides, he did not have any objection to Narayanan's name for vice-presidency.

However, V P Singh himself went back on the assurance he had given to the Left parties and insisted that only a SC/ST should be elected as President. Thus the BJP and Lok Dal combined to oscuttle the consensus on presidency. What is more, despite the hostility between the two parties, secret talks were initiated between them for setting up a common candidate to defeat Congress candidates for the two offices, although for public consumption V P Singh and Ram Vilas Paswan were all the time holding forth that the Congress and the BJP had a secret alliance.

The Congress thus was left, with no option but to announce the name of its candidate for presidency. Narasimha Rao also had to sure

that the Congress candidates for the Rajya Sabha from different state assemblies were elected without any upset for the party. In selecting the candidates as much representation was given to women and minorities as possible and claims of different factions in the states were accommodated in a manner that no bitterness was generated. Candidates who had been defeated in the Lok Sabha elections were not accommodated in keeping with the party's traditions.

But most of his time was taken up in laying down the guidelines for the Indo-US talks and preparations for the Tokyo visit. The Americans were embittered by the isolation of President Bush during the preparations for the Rio Summit and a Rio itself, in the exposure of the hollowness of the American claim for leadership of the world. Even in his address at Rio Bush had bragged the US was the leader, not a follower. But firstly even such alies as France, Germany, British and Japan did not support his stand and secondly Germany and Japan were more forthcoming than the US in making contributions to the funds to be raided for making the planet a safer place for living.

The strategy which had yielded to favourable results at Rio was also prescribed for the talks with the visiting US term. The underlying feature of the strategy to continue the dialogue and place alternative proposals for consideration by the other side. That was the only way to avoid American pressures on a whole range of issues. The preparations for the visit to Japan were undertaken in an atmosphere of optimisim generated by Japan's role at Rio. But the main purpose of Narasimha Rao's visit was not to seek Japanese aid but to seek consensus between the two countries on issues of world politics and regional affairs.

## PRESIDENTIAL POLL

### BJP Challenge to Congress Chicanery

New Delhi, June 20: The consensus moves having been ditched by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao by announcing Vice-President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma's name as the Congress nominee for the Presidential office, a contest is certain, most probably between

Dr Sharma and a candidate supported by the opposition parties. As we go to the press. Shri G. G. Swell, a Christian leader from North-east, whose name was earlier proposed by BJP for the post of Vice-President, was emerging as Opposition's choice for the Presidential contest.

Although Shri Swell began his political career in the Congress, he emerged as the top leader of the All-Party Hill Leader's Conference of Meghalaya. He has been a member of the Lok Sabha for 15 years and its Deputy Speaker for a long spell.

As a Christian and a tribal. Shri Swell's elevation to the high office is likely to satisfy several sections of the society. But most important, it satisfied JD's stand for an ST/SC candidate and thereby opens up chances of the Opposition supporting a joint candidate.

Meanwhile, the manner in which the Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao scuttled the consensus efforts exposes his real intention of emerging as the ringmaster of the political circus. He pretended to consult the Opposition, especially the BJP, which is the main Opposition party. He pretended to consulate his party colleagues and got from them an endorsement that he should presidential hopefuls and then suddenly announced his choice. But not before the BJP had called his bluff of securing unanimity for his Congress nominees for both the posts of President and Vice-President under the garb of his fake consensus formula.

Shri Narasimha Rao's consultations with the Opposition were merely a cloak for the latter accepting his "Heads I win, tails you lose' policy" It was a different Narasimha Rao from the one in July 1991 when he agreed to share the two posts of Speaker and Deputy Speaker between the ruling party and the Opposition, leaving it to the main Opposition party to choose its candidate for the second post.

Rao had almost succeeded in bringing the Leftists around by proposing Shri S. D. Sharma's name as President and Shri K. R. Narayanan, a backward class leftist Congress, for Vice-President. He, in fact, was using the Left Front to persuade the Janata Dal leader V. P. Singh to agree to Rao's game plan in the name a 'package'. The sole anxiety, however, was to prevent Rao from having an agreement with BJP as in the case of Speaker and Deputy

Speaker. On the other hand, while Rao was strutting about trying to get two Congressmen elected to the high office, BJP kept a studied silence on the issue. But just when Rao though he had succeeded in his plan, BJP exposed his consensus formula as a ploy to make the non-Congress elements support.

## 'REVOLT' IN LEFT FRONT OVER JYOTI BASU'S PRO-CONGRESS POSTURE

Congress candidates. I demanded one post for the Opposition because it argued the Congress did not have a majority in the electoral college for the Presidential poll. Moreover, consensus did not mean a one-way traffics. It involved compromises and give and take in a friendly atmosphere.

The BJP was willing to support Shri S. D. Sharma as a consensus candidate provided the Vie-President's post was conceded to the Opposition. In this context the BJP even suggested Tribe, but is not a BJP man. The BJP, however, adopted a flexible approach and was willing to agree to any other mutually acceptable name.

BJP's move also sent the right signals in JD camp whose leader V. P. Singh had threatened his own party of resignation for Lok Sabha if it failed to put up an ST/SC candidate for Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Allergic to the BJP, and even to a god proposal coming from it, the JD leadership first took the BJP proposal as a ploy for grabbing the post of Vice-President for a party nominee. But Narasimha Rao's action in unilaterally announcing his nominee as a Congress candidate for the Presidential office and BJP's flexible approach on the Opposition's choice, brought rethinking in JD's camp. The initiative taken by the BJP to challenge the Congress supremacy, the projection of a trible leader Prof. G. G. Swell from the Christian dominated Meghalaya to challenge Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma and S. S. Barnala for Opposition's choice as Vice-President, weakened the political game of the V. P. Singh camp.

After, all the concern for, SCs or STs is not the monopoly of V. P. Singh and his Sancho Panza, Ram Vilas Paswan though not to the same crazily motivated extent. Paswan, George Fernandes,

Madhu Dandavate have all welcomed Swell's candidature and are likely to agree to put him up for the Presidential office.

The National Front leaders are holding a meeting tonight (June 20) to discuss the issue, socialists among them who want to coordination between BJP and other Opposition parties to confront the Congress are likely to press for a joint Opposition candidate against Sharma whose choice has been described by Paswan as 'casteist'. This has raised hopes of joint front on the Percentile poll eve though the understanding may remain informal to allow for some JD leader's allergy to BJP.

But the Left Front's attitude is not yet clear. Shri L. K. Advani had a telephonic conversation with the West Bengal Chief Minister, Shri Jyoti Basu, on June 17 during which the BJP leader is believed to have spoken about the need to evolve a consensus among opposition parties for the forthcoming elections. Shri Advani told Shri Basu that his party had nothing against the persons of Dr S. D. Sharma and Shri K. R. Narayanan but consensus should not mean handing over both the offices to the Congress on a platter. Shri Basu's response was said to be positive. He told the BJP leader that he would be coming to the national capital on June 21 when they would further discuss the issue.

The Left, however, is still in two minds. Jyoti Basu's haste in welcoming the nomination of Dr Sharma for the President's post shocked CPI leaders like Indrajit Gupta, and even the rising stars of the CPI-M like Prakash Karat were surprised though he did not express it. The final say would be with Harkishan Singh Surjit and J. D. leaders who are banking on Surjit's support for a joint Opposition candidate. There are report that Basu may still try to get a package of Vice-President's post for an SC/ST from Rao for supporting Sharma at his scheduled meeting with PM on June 21.

On the other hand, the attempt of the Jyoti Basu Government to play second fiddle to the Narasimha Rao government in Tin Bigha has rattled the Left Front and an open revolt is in sight. For the first time, the CPI-M is apologetic about its political stand vis-a-vis the Narasimha Rao Government. and that partially explained the virulence with which it supported the industrial workers strike of June 16.

It is gradually dawning in the Left Front cadres that Narasimha Rao is getting Jyoti Basu to do his dirty work on Presidential election as well as in Tin Bigha—that is had it over to Bangladesh, ignoring the strong feeling of not only the local people, but of large sections inside and outside West Bengal.

Yet most leaders in the Opposition are looking forward to an agreed Opposition candidate for President's post with or without Leftist support. A clear picture is likely to emerge by June 22 when all the Opposition leaders including Jyoti Basu will be in New Delhi for consultations and an announcement is likely to be made that evening to faciliate filing of nomination papers of the Opposition's choice on 23rd or 24th, the dead line for nominations.

## A POLITICAL PAWN

The message sent out by the poll was "Goodbye Consensus, Hellow Confrontation."

**By Zafar Agha with Javed M. Ansari**

On June 17 at 8 a. m., the phone rang at L. K. Advani's Pandara Park residence. The call, Prime, Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, politely told the leader of the Opposition that he would like to "consult" him on the suddenly-contentious Presidential poll issue, the call was hardly unexpected. The Congress(I)- BJP honeymoon had already withered on the political vine. Now, the election of the next-President of India, intended to be a solemn and dignified affair, had snow-balled into a major political issue. More important, it had also become the most visible symbol of the end of consensus politics and a dangerous return to confrontation.

In terms of electoral college arithmetic, the eventual Congress(I) nominee, Vice-President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, is virtually assured to being the next tenant of Rashtrapati Bhavan with a five-years lease. However, Rao's attempt to gain a firmer grip on his own party and the Opposition's internal crises turned the presidential issue into a convenient—even if it was contentious—handle for both Rao and the opposition parties to use for their respective political ends. In the bargain the main loser was the office

of the President, which is meant to be above politics and constituencies but has now been reduced to just another pawn on the political chessboard.

The meeting between Rao and Advani at Race Course Road in the night of June 17, was only the start of the Complex cat-and-mouse game that eventually exposed the political undercurrents of the moment: Rao's attempts to forge a unified face for the party on the presidential issue, the BJP's new mode of confrontation with the ruling party and V. P. Singh's divisive caste politics that eventually alienated the Janata Dal's Left partners.

Rao's strategy was clear—at one on level. Advani, during their meeting, had laid out a three-point formula for the presidential poll: that the BJP would agree on consensus for the presidential poll: that there should be common candidate both for the President and vice-president, with both names being decided simultaneously and that one of the posts would go to the opposition parties. Rao agreed to consider the proposals with the proviso that on the Vice-Presidential issue, he would have to consult his party colleagues.

But even as the opposition parties were thrashing out the possibility of backing a joint candidate—G. G. Swell, former Lok Sabha deputy speaker, and a tribal from Meghalaya—the Congress(I) jumped the gun and announced Dr Sharma as their candidate. The BJP's reaction was predictable. A visibly angry Murli Manohar Joshi, party president, told India Today: "The Prime Minister's unilateral decision to put up Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma as the Congress(I) candidate is the end of consensus politics". National Front Chairman N. T. Rama Rao described it as a "dishonour to the Opposition". And even West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, who played a major role in convincing the Left parties to back Dr Sharma, expressed his "disappointment" over the Prime Minister's failure to announce a nominee for the vice-presidential poll which is scheduled to be held in September.

But clearly, behind the Congress(I)'s decision were the subterranean rumblings within the party that forced Rao's and tarnished the presidential election with needless controversy, Rao was already under prressure from the Congress(I)-dominated Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Forum headed by party MP

Arvind Netam. The forum had passed a resolution stating that the country should have a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe President in the Dr Ambedkar centenary year.

The demand for a Harijan or a tribal President, later enthusiastically endorsed by V. P. Singh, added a new dimension to the presidential election. For the first time the presidential poll had become a victim of caste politics, a factor that no party can afford to publicly ignore. Even the Left parties had suggested the name of Congress(I) Harijan Lok Sabha member K. R. Narayanan for the Vice-presidentship.

But within the Congress(I), it exposed the roots of the power play in the party. Behind the formum's decision were disgruntled leaders like former home minister Butta Singh, who are finding political oblivion uncomfortable to handle. Pushing the non-confrontationist Prime Minister into a corner is the easiest way to broker a deal. And a deal was what finally resulted. Rao had asked Minister of State for Rural Development G. Venkataswami to convince Harijans MPs in the party to back off on their demand. Venkataswami had a succession of meetings with Buta Singh, and Rao himself held a meeting with Netam. Shortly after, Buta Singh's protege Mohinder Singh Kalyan was included in the Punjab list of Congress(I) nominees for the Rajya Sabha. The deal had been struck. On June 15, Buta Singh, Netam and Mukul Wasnik, the three most vocal Harijan Congress(I) MPs, stated that although they would prefer a Harijan President, they would support the party's stand on the issue.

Menwhile, the issue was creating more serious ripples in the opposition ranks. Within the BJP the tussle between Advani and Joshi was finally settled. Joshi won this round when Advani was virtually asked to keep away from the press on the presidential issue, Joshi took a hawkish position vis-a-vis the Congress(I), describing the situation as the "end of the myph of consensus politics".

But the most significant fall-out in opposition ranks was the damage done to the four-year-old alliance between the National Front and the Left Front with the two major opposition blocks announcing that they had "agreed to disagree" on the issue, and declaring their support to rival candidates in the impending

presidential election. Jyoti Basu' unilateral announcement on June 21 that the Left Front will support Shankar Dayal Sharma, exposed the fissures within the National Front-Left Front alliance and also within the Left Front itself. The CPI was unhappy with Basu's firm commitment to Rao on Shankar Dayal Sharma and wanted the Congress(I) to back Harijan nominee for the Vice-presidentship. CPI General Secretary Indrajit Gupta made it clear that "the CPI is not bound by any commitment of support to Dr Sharma, specially after the Prime Minister had backed down from his assurance on the issue".

V. P. Singh's National Front, already under threat of political extinction as a national party, virtually fell apart on June 22 when its Chairman N. T. Rama Rao walked off serving an ultimatum to National Front members that if they did not adopt Swell as the Front nominee he would sever his ties with the alliance. Rama Rao's ultimatum came in the wake of serious differences within the Janata Dal on the presidential issue. A powerful section of the party had taken the line that if the party supports Swell, it would appear to be coming close to the BJP. Orissa strongman Biju Patnaik told party President S. R. Bommai on the telephone that the party should not par company with the Left on this issue. He even threatened that if the Janata Dal put up its own candidate, he might not back it. Besides, leaders like Shahabuddin and Chandrajit Yadav express serious reservations on the party seemingly coming close to the BJP in the presidential election. Finally, Singh's line was accepted by the National Front but the schism are now deeper than ever before.

But the real test for the Congress(I), and for Rao, still lies ahead. Having stage-managed a facade of party unity on the presidential issue, Rao desperately needs to engineer Dr Sharma's victory by a large enough margin to confrim his holdon the party. His political secretary Jitendra Prasad along with Congress(I) general secretaries have identified four target groups: one consisting of independent MPs and MLAs, the second comprising Congress(I) allies in Parliament and in the states, the third which includes opposition grouping committed to the Congress(I) Chandra Shekhar's SJP, the Raju group in the Telgu Desam and the Ajit faction in the Janta Dal, and finally, individual MPs and MLA in opposition parties who can be won over by means fair or foul.

Whatever the result, the presidential poll has already produced two major sign posts to shape future politics. Political parties in the country are firmly back on the confrontationist path marking the end of one year of consensus politics in the country. And V. P. Singh has permanently entwined the caste factor into all future elections, including that of the President.

Shankar Dayal Sharma, by reputation and past record, is quite clearly the best choice under the circumstances. But the charged political atmosphere under which he will operate could make the job of India's ninth President the most controversial in history.

## WITH RAO STALLING ON VICE-PRESIDENCY

### NF-Left fall out

The Congress had muddled through to certain victory of its presidential candidate, Dr Sharnakr Dayal Sharma. There is no way of Prof. S. G. Well, the BJP/Janata Dal candidate, getting to the top.

The presidential poll has acquired the high-blown national profile it has, because in the electoral college the opposition, if combined, has an edge over the Congress. In other words, on the face of it the Congress will have to lean on either the BJP or the NF/Left combine marginally to get its candidate through. That gave room for the BJP and the NF for jockeying.

At the outset, the BJP was all set for a second honeymoon with the Congress to share the posts of President and Vice-President, as they did earlier in the election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

But things had changed. The Left was determined to guard against a repetition of that election in the Lok Sabha. The Congress was prepared to let the National Front have the post of Deputy Speaker. But it was the unreasonable insistence of the Janata Dal, especially that of Rabi Ray (former speaker), on the speakership that paved the way for the Congress, BJP adjustment.

### V. P. Singh's bluster

The Left subsequently realised it was a tactical mistake, and this time round it was extra careful. Tirupati Congress plenary

resolution decrying the BJP's brewing of a cocktail of politics and religion did mark a change in the political landscape which also came handy to the Left. For that reason, the BJP was virtually been out of the race.

For a while, however, things moved very slowly, because the Congress leadership delayed naming its candidate for the presidency. In the interregnum, V. P. Singh was sharpening his factional sword. He shot off a statement, threatening to resign his Lok Sabha membership if a member of the Schedule Caste or Tribes is not put up for the presidentship.

Meanwhile, the Congress Kumbhakarna woke up and named Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma. His candidature evoked very wide response, the two communist parties welcomed his nomination. While doing so, they tried to prevail upon the Congress leadership simultaneously to name an SC/ST candidate for the post of Vice-President. It was in that context hat the name of K. R. Narayanan came up.

As the two communist parties figured out, an SC/ST candidate for vice-presidentship, Congressman or otherwise, could have gone some way to bring the National Front in the process of consensus

But the Congress bulked at the suggestion of simultaneous nominations. It, apparently, has its own internal problems.

At any rate, Narasimha Rao declined to accept the Communist plea for simultaneous nominations. Reason? The nomination of the vice-presidency is premature as the vacancy for the post has yet to arise.

Admittedly, such reasoning is purely technical. The election for the post of Vice-President has to beheld in August, while the other is scheduled in July. But there is no denying that the Congress has reason to concentrate on the elections, one at a time.

It is understandably keen on getting Dr Sharma elected as President, for he has not only the requisite national stature but is also one of them, one of the Congress old guard. It is possibly afraid that if a member of one weaker section is now named for vice-presidentship, it might temporarily alienate other weaker sections, to the detriment of Dr Sharma's prospects.

Apart from anything else, the non-naming out a vice-presidential candidate has created a split between the National Front, especially the Janata Dal, and the Left. The Janata Dal has gone ahead and backed the candidature of Prof. Swell, V. P. Singh himself has filed Swell's nomination with L. K. Advani in two.

One bright spot in the ensuing confusion is the CPM's announcement of its support to Dr Sharma, while keeping its options open in the vice-presidential contest. The CPI may do more or less the same thing at its ongoing National Council meeting. For the party did welcome the nomination of Dr Sharma.

### RSP'S Reaction Infantile

Whoever ultimately becomes the Vice-President, a man of Dr Sharma's experience and integrity is a must at the helm of Indian affairs, as things stand. The RSP has taken a lead out of the IPF book to argue the case against the Congress nominee, a parallel to the Left's case on the economic policy.

This is infantile Leftism. The Indian Left is surely viewing with concern the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the like and it should surely spare a thought to the process of destabilisation in India.

The Narasimha Rao government is still a minority government. Mind you, a *rath yatra* could topple a government. V. P. Singh can forget it, coming as he does from the princely class. But those interested in the stability of the Indian nation state cannot afford to.

## CHOOSING A PRESIDENT

### Is it the politics of transition?

Day (Congress(I)-Bharatya Janata Party, National Front-Left) now appear unaligned and parties that swore eternal hatred are seeing a congruence of interests (National Front-BJP). The man who started off as the vice-presidential hopeful of one party (the BJP) became the presidential nominee of another (National Front). The fallout of the utilateral Congress nomination of Sharma the BJP-

Congress estrangement, the Congress-Left congruence and the call for a President from the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, is now getting a sharper focus in the politics of the election of the Vice-President which is some months away.

The BJP-Congress (I) rift and the support being extended to S. D.Sharma by the Left, overriding the Janata Dal/National Front's stance of supporting G. G. Swell as their presidential nominee, indicate yet another turning point in India's political journey. These certainly mark the end of the brand of 'consensual politics' espoused by P. V. Narasimha Rao, which was nothing out a euphemism for an alliance with the BJP. Whether it marks a new 'Left manoeuvre'of the Congress or a pasue in economic liberalisation is not clear. The one clear signal is that everyone is behaving and reaching on the premise that they are participating in the politics of transition.

**V. Sudershan**

The issue of alignment and 'unalignment' in Indian politics has a curious analogy to the situation confronting India in international polities. Just as the Soviet Union's collapse upset the certainties of the previous era. the assassination of Rajiv Gadhi has been creating eddies of uncertainty. The position of the Left, particularly the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in this context was carefully throughout well before the developments in June. Its stance is connected to ideology rather than political calculation, though it is believed that the CPI(M)'s votes will be more important than anticipated. The need to stop the BJP's insidious attempt to gobble up the Congress(I) was urgent, and the country had to be led by a person of stature in these troubled times.

This undoubtedly is the beginning of the process of reassessing the post-Nehru-Gandhi Congress. The Principal criticism by the Left of the Congress was based on its 'authoritarian' tendencies rather than economic and social policies. And this was linked to the Gandhis—mother and sons. The dilemma now is how to support a 'non-authoritarian' Congress, but one which is veering far to the right of the Gandhis of economic policy. But, as the CPI(M) statement announcing support for Sharma indicated the party has been disturbed by the 'all-Opposition unity' concept which

enabled seat adjustment's between the BJP and the Janata Dal to the immense benefit of the former. So, according to the Politburo statement of June 23 , the CPI(M) took into account the 'prevailing situation' and decided to back S. D. Sharma, a person of stature, "who will uphold democratic and secular credentials embodied in the Constitution."

The announcement of Sharma's nomination between two Prime ministerial tours abroad was remarkable—he was proposed by Narasimha Rao, Arjun Singh, Sharad Pawar, Jayalalitha, Hiteshwar Saikla, S. Bangarappa and Ajit Singh, and seconded by a galaxy of minor stars. Significantly, among the proposers were Arvind Netam, Buta Singh and Jagannath Pahadia, all associated with the S. C. and S. T. Forum which was supposed to be canvassing for a President from the S. C. and S. T. segment. The care with which the proposers and secondaries have been chosen shows the truly feudal manner in which fealty is still sought and given in the Congress.

Most people will welcome this nomination and even election, but for a variety of reasons the BJP and the National Front are opposing it and supporting instead Swell, a former Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Sharma has been widely respected as an old-style Congressman—secular, democratic, even socialistic. His performance as Vice-President, though an office not quite designed to measure these things, has been exemplary, and those who expected that he would be a rubber-stamp figure have learnt to their cot that he can be difficult when pushed.

The Prime Minister probably would not have had Sharma as the first choice for this reason. Every Prime Minister would like a President suitably beholden to him. For a variety of reasons, Sharma, while certainly grateful for the honour, is not quite a yes-man that S.B. Chavan or B. Shankaranad could have been. In a sense, Sharma's candidature took on relentless momentum as soon as it was clear that R. Venkataraman was in his way out. (In fact there are those who argue that the outgoing President would not have been averse to staying on had there been a unanimous demand for it. But for some reason there was no such demand.)

One of the primary reasons for this was that the presidential elections became tied to the political situation. The 'Parliamentary

wing' of the BJP wanted to use the change to push its line of competitive cooperation with the Congress(I) a notch further. It wanted an election so as to bargain for a vice-presidential candidate of its own. L. K. Advani was persuasively arguing that since the Congress(I) did not quite have a majority Government there was nothing wrong in it agreeing to have the BJP's choice as Vice-President. Sensitive to the S. C. and S. T. issue, the BJP came to accept the idea of putting up Swell. Advani and his colleagues reasoned that by putting up a Scheduled Tribe leader who is a Christian they would show that they were sensitive to the issues being posed as well as to the needs of the minorities.

It is significant that when Sharma's nomination was announced on June 18, BJP president Murli Manohar Joshi declared his party would not support the candidature. Joshi, it appears, has been quite miffed over the fact that the Congress leadership has been negotiating with and talking to Advani, who is merely the leader of the BJP Parliamentary Party, and not himself, the party president. Perhaps Advani had assured his party colleagues that he may in fact have been able to work out a linkage between the presidential and vice-presidential elections. If so, the Congress announcement have been come like a bolt from the blue. The angry BJP reaction seems to suggest that.

The stand of the Left parties has been quite modest. They have wanted to break the Narasimha Rao brand of 'consensus politics' and ensure that the Congress is not seduced by the BJP again. They have refused to endorse their ally the Janata Dal's call for an S. C. or S. T. person as President, but signalled that the issue was a potent one and could perhaps he addressed by electing suitable candidate as the Vice-President. Given the line-up of the electoral college, the Left strategists argued there was no chance of getting a joint Opposition candidate through, especially since there was no question of cooperating with the BJP. They were therefore, satisfied with Sharma for President since he is a traditional Congressman and fulfills their criterion of being secular and democratic.

To meet what they say is a genuine demand to address the continued neglect of the S. Cs and the S. Ts, they felt a gesture was needed by it could be met by the election as Vice-President of a

person coming from this background. The person meant is clearly K. R. Narayanan, who comes from a humble background but who has distinguished himself in public service as Ambassador, Vice-Chancellor and Minister in the Union Government. Above, all, he has been Congressman with no hint of dissidence in his make-up notwithstanding the well-known aversion Kerala Chief Minister K. Karunakaran has for him, a factor which undoubtedly puts him in good stead with the Left.

Like a gambler throwing a dice for one last chance, V. P. Singh, seeking that elusive electoral majority from the demographic majority of the poor and the backward, raised and demand for an SC or ST person as President. In mid-June, the SC and ST forum,which cause across party line but is inspired by the Janata Dal leader Ram Vilas Paswan, held its first meeting but failed to endorse categorically V. P. Singh's demand.

SC and ST politics is complex, and many of the paricipants from the ruling party shrewdly utilised the occasion to signal Narasimha Rao that they also happen to be around. What the forum did do was to ensure that the next Vice-President will belong to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe: it also indicated there was no shortage of candidates for high offices, and as Indrajt Gupta. CPI leader, put it, "the claim of the SCs. and STs to get their representatives elected to either or both posts has become irresistible."

## IRONY

There is an irony perhaps in the fact that this is the second time V. P. Singh has articulated a political theme only to have it coopted into the programmes of other parties. First it was Mandal and reservations for the backward classes, which everyone swears by now. And now it is an S. C. or S. T. candidate for the highest office in the land. His line has resulted in fissures in his own party revealed by a demand for a "vote of conscience," which is nothing but a call for support to S. D. Sharma. Leaders such as Syed Shahabuddin, Yunus Saleem, Rajmohan Gandhi, Chimnabhai Mehta and Chandrajit Yadav have told V. P. Singh that voting alongside the BJP is anathema to them. In fact, there is even a possibility that the Janata Dal may split once again on this issue.

## DEAD-END STREET

But is the National Front-Left alliance over? No, if V. P. Singh realises that he is in a dead-end street. The June 23 statement declaring the disagreement was moderation tune and indicated the areas of agreement in combating communalism and the "retrograde economic policies." It is up to V. P. Singh and his colleagues to decide which is their main plank—anti-Congressism or anti-communalism. As for V. P. Singh, he has oscillated between not just these two trends but one more, which may, somewhat inelegantly, be termed as "SC&ST - ism".

Congressmen were somewhat bemused by their own situation. Thy could, with the help of their allies, pull through in the presidential elections, but they could run into a problem in the vice-presidential election where the electoral college comprises the two Houses of Parliament. For the first time Congress has lost its majority in the Rajya Sabha as a result of the recent elections. This does not mean a real threat, Congress mobilisation being superior to that by the combined Opposition, but it does represent a danger signal. Nevertheless, the Congress goal from the outset has been clear—no concession on either of the two high offices. It was one thing to trade off the Deputy Speakership of the Lok Sabha to the BJP since that post by convention is offered to the Opposition, but it would be uncosionable to offer any other party the vice-presidency since that meant giving away the ship of the Rajya Sabha, a position with substantial political significance.

## TRIANGULAR JOUST

So it became a triangular joust, the Congress(I) seeking to retain the freedom to nominate and elect the President and the Vice-President and the other three formations seeing gain in preventing this. For this reason, both the left and the BJP reacted negatively to the Congress(I) strategy of delinking the presidential and vice-presidential elections. The Congress(I) is hoping that with the presidential election under the belt, the vice-presidential election can be taken care of later.

With half the battle through, the score-card is showing pluses and minuses. The BJP starting off with the aim of obtaining the vice-presidency and the Left trying to deny it this, here the Left is one up. The Janata Dal-National Front's joker in the pack in the form of the SC and ST claim has worked, but not in the manner intended. They have sensitised the elctorate with this issue but have not broken the party loyalities of the SC and ST and MPs of the Congress and other parties who participated in the Forum meeting V.P. Singh may have scored a moral point but has got precious little in return.

There is no point in lamenting the collapse of the 'combined oppositions'. That concept has no meaning in the context of the politics of the last three years which have seen enormous gains for communal forces. Anti-Congressism as a policy can have no meaning in the context of that party's present infirmity and the BJP's strength. Advani's claim that the Left has forgone the first real opportunity to defeat the Congress is specious since the BJP tried to negotiate a package with the Congress and tuned to the rest of the Opposition only when the effort failed. In the process the BJP cleverly appropriated the National Front's vice-presidential candidate, Swell, as its own presidential candidate.

In fact, the chances are that the Left strategy may in the end prove more productive since it has been the most modest and it may have deflected the Congress(I)-BJP alliance. The decision to support Sharma, notwithstanding the ideological claims of their allies, was to ensure that the BJP is not the inadvertent beneficiary of its (the Lefts') antipathy towards the Congress. True, the Left has been unhappy about the Congress wriggling out of the "package" formula. But that is politics, and the Congress could not have been expected to tie itself up without a cause.

An interesting sidelight of the politics of the presidential vice-presidential elections has been the unity exhibited by the Congress(I). The obvious tensions between the Prime Minister and his putative Number Two, Arjun Singh, are mute. Arjun Singh went on record denying he was opposed to Sharma's nomination and then become the second man after the Prime Minister to propose his name. In the face of the emerging chasm between the Congress(I)

and the BJP, Arjun Singh is taking pains to declare that his activities are in line with the overall leadership of Narasimha Rao.

Notwithstanding the discomfiture of the Left. The Prime Minister has cleverly insisted on keeping his options on the name. He cannot be faulted for this. In politics, as in poker, bluff is legitimate tactics. His stance is also justified by he enhancement of the strength of the Congress vis-a-vis the other parties. At first sight his position may appear bad, considering the slippage of the Congress to minority status in the Upper House as well, but the state of the Opposition is even worse. In Parliamentary politics it is plurality that counts, not majority.

A measure of this is the support drummed up by the party for its candidate, besides by its allies and others—the All-India Anna Dravida Munetra Kazhagam, the Samajawadi Janata Party, the breakaway Telugu Desam, the Congress(S), the Sikkim Sangram Parishad, the Manipur People's Party, the two factions of the Kerala Congress and the Mizo National Front besides the CPI(M) and the CPI. The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) are likely to extend support.

The vice-presidential election is likely to be an all-Congress affair. The CPI(M) has categorically declared support for a person of SC—ST background and "appropriate stature" The National Front-BJP will have their candidate or candidates. Should the Congress not name K. R. Narayanan or a person of similar background and stature, the Left may prefer to oppose the nominee or abstain from voting. but it will not support the BJP-backed contestant if it is to maintain the logic of its present position. There are strong grounds for blieving that Narasimha Rao has assured Jyoti Basu that Narayanan will indeed be the vice-presidential nominee.

## A NEW PHASE

The run-up to the nomination and its outcome are likely to spell the end of one phase of the politics of the post-Rajiv Gandhi era. This was the concept of "consensual politics" floated by Narasimha Rao. Notwithstanding its claim, this was essentially a Congress(I)-BJP alliance from which the latter hoped to profit but which actually benefited the former. However, the quasi-alliance reached its natural

limit since in the massive Hindu heartland political dynamics pit the two parties against each other. And, in the coming period this is the region that will see considerable political activity as the bell goes off for the next round. In 1989. the Congress, reeling from multiple blows, suffered a TKO (Technical Knock Out); in 1991 it was a near KO (Knock Out). Now, it is on its feet again, still punch-drunk but set to go.

## MADHUSUDAN SRINIVAS

Sportsman, lawyer, teacher, governor (Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab), Vice-President...These are among the many roles Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, the Congress(I) nominee for the presidency, has played in a long and distinguished career.

Add to this the oft-cited fact that "the man has no enemies", and you have what most people consider the ideal qualifications for occupying Rashtrapati Bhavan. And given the paucity of clean an acceptable parsonages in the current political environment, "no negatives" is considered the "biggest positive".

It was Sharma who saved fact for the Congress(I) in Andhra Pradesh, reinstating N. T. Rama Rao as Chief Minister in 1981 after Ram Lal, his predecessor as Governor, had sullied the party's democratic face. And it was he who played a pacific role as Punjab Governor during a crucial period in the 1980s, and later lost his daughter and son-in-law to terrorism in Delhi.

And again it was he who broke down, anguished by the conduct of the Congress(I)'s shouting brigade, in the Rajya Sabha, of which he is Chairperson.

Residents of Bhopal, where Sharma was born and brought up, find it heartening that the very qualities which are considered a liability for political survival have now gained "*daak (doctor) saab*"—as he is addressed by his younger followers—and his candidacy enviable acceptance in such diverse components of Indian politics as the Congress(I) and the Left.

No wonder, Opposition stalwarts such as V. P. Singh (Janata Dal) and L. K. Advani (BJP), who have sponsored the rival

candidature of G. G. Swell, have been careful not to assail Sharma and his personal-political bona fides, but only the manner in which his candidacy was decided.

Born on August 19, 1918 in the family of Pandit Khushi Lal Sharma, a 'vaid' (doctor) with a long record of service to the poor, Shankar Dayal Sharma spent his early years at school in the (then Bhopal) nawabdom, and went on to complete his graduate and post-graduate studies (mainly in law) in Agra. Lucknow and Allabahad. (He stood first in the L.L.M. exam at Lucknow University.)

He then went to Cambridge (Ph.D.in law), where he was associated with the Tagore Society and the Cambridge Majlis. Sharma was later called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. from where he went on the become a Fellow at Harvard Law School.

Despite having begun legal practice in Lucknow in 1940, Sharma was drawn back to Bhopal, where he was involved in the freedom struggle as well as a movement against the Nawab.

All this time Sharma demonstrated the propensity which has stood him in good stead—of keeping political differences and personal associations apart.

After Independence, as Chief Minister of Bhopal State (1950-52) and as a Minister in the Madhya Pradesh Cabinet (1952-67), Sharma played a pivotal role, in convicing Jawaharlal Nehru and others to choose Bhopal as the capital of the new State of Madhya Pradesh, over the strong claims of cities like Jabalpur. He was also instrumental in ensuring that the earlier confrontations were forgotten. The Nawab's property was utilised as State Government offices.

Sharma's academic record, scholarly learning and reasonably good record as an administrator and that prime virtue of the model Congressman—loyalty—gained him considerable stature in the Nehru years, and right until the Congress split of 1969.

At this juncture Sharma sprang a surprise by choosing to go along with Indira Gandhi against the Syndicate and its leaders, with whom he was believed to be very close. He was "the only one

among the old guard who stood up for Indira Gandhi." says a Sharma acolyte for Madhya Pradesh.

Having passed the 'loyalty test' yet again, Sharma was given a key role in the post-split Congress of the 1970s.

A stint as Communications Minister (during which period the process of modernising for Bhopal was begun) during 1974-77 ended with what was probably the only setback in his career — the defeat in the post-Emergency general elections. (Some partymen say Sharma was one of numerous older Congress leaders who sat back and watched mutely while Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi read the riot act).

His handling of organisational work — lectures to young partymen — during 1977-80 helped him acquire an additional qualification — of being an acknowledged authority on Congress history. This came in handy given the transition that the Congress underwent at that time. It was vital for the party to list the services of someone who could apply a serious, academic and reputed intellect to such a contentious subject as Congress history.

Back in Parliament during 1980-84, Sharma became part of the old guard bulwarks. Then came the crucial tests of the transition from politician to elder statesman. Beginning with a grave personal tragedy — the killing of Gitanjali and Lalit Maken (daughter and son-in-law) by Sikh militants in New Delhi — the post-1984 phase literally put Sharma through a political and personal wringer.

It is a tribute to his sagacity and the respect with which he is viewed by political friend and foe alike that he rose from being Governor of Maharashtra to Vice-President of India — he was abroad when the choice surprised many senior aspirants.

Sharma took over as Vice-President and Chairman of the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) on September 3, 1987, and served the national wisely and without a hitch through three successive governments — barring that run-in with the shouting brigade — and through turbulent times in Parliament.

It is therefore, no surprise that Shankar Dayal Sharma is now the common choice of men as far apart as P. V. Narasimha Rao and Jyoti Basu.

**M. S.**

George Gilbert Swell is no reluctant candidate pushed into the battle for the presidency. But again, none can say he was not pushed.

Be that as it may, you can with ease respect a person who makes V. P. Singh and L. K. Advani agree, whatever the nature of the 'agreement'.

For G. G. Swell, it has been a long road—from the Khasi tribal village of Laitkynsew (65 km southwest of Shillong, on the border with Bangladesh) where he was born on August 5, 1924, to Cherapunji (where he attended primary school) to Calcutta University (M. A. English Literature, 1945) and later New Delhi.

And, given the political arithmetic, it may be an equally long and tortuous road from 14 Rajendra Prasad Road (his residence as an MP) to Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The resume Swell's household, and the candidate himself, were handing out on the day the BJP and the Janata Dal were filing his nomination papers barely covered one typed sheet. That one fact is a reflection of the log-cabin simplicity most people who have come into contact with Swell remember him for. But that asset is simultaneously a liability. He was reluctant, perhaps unable, to name a campaign plan, a manager or team even on June 23. He answers the phone himself, there is a Contessa but no crawiling retinue of househelp or bodyguards outside the house—there is no security gauntlet to run to get to the candidate for the presidency.

**THE CHALLENGER**

The man who could be President did not begin as a politician. He ended a stint as a government school teacher in Shillong (in Meghalaya) when he was transferred to Sylhet (now in Bangladesh) on the eve of Independence. He chose to stay on in Shillong, and took up a teaching job in a college where, over the years, he became involved in the cultural politics of the North-East.

Swell did not begin his political life as a Congressman—he was part of a diverse bunch of leaders from all over the North-East

who strove for a political identity distinct from the Congress, and a cultural identity distinct from Assam and the Assamese.

That last wellspring of political action inspired him to play a prominent part in getting Statehood for Meghalaya. It also helped him establish a strong hold on the Shillong Lok Sabha seat (from 1962 to 1977, through three general elections) as a leading member of the All-Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC).

Swell hit the big-time in politics when he was elected Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha in 1969, and went on to be re-elected in 1971. When he lost the election in 1977, the Morarji Desai Government made him Ambassador to Norway (1977-80). On Indira Gandhi's comeback he was sent to Burma (1980-84). He became a primary member of the Congress(I) in 1984 and made it back to the Lok Sabha in the general election that year. "Petty quarrels and political bullying" led to his resignation from the party in early 1988, he told Frontline.

However, he retained his seat in 1989 on an independent ticket. He shifted to the Rajya Sabha with multi-party backing in 1990.

The two years since then, till June 1992, have been a quiet time of reckoning for Swell. Now is the time for the final one. With a little help from L. K. advani and V. P. Singh.

## THE LEFT STAND

### Interview with Prakash Karat

The decision of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to support the candidature of Shankar Dayal Sharma was a turning point in he run-up to the presidential election. Prakash Karat, member of the party Politiburo, explained the considerations behind the decision in an interview to Sukuma Muralidharan in New Delhi. Excerpts:

The CPI(M)'s decision to support Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma is seen as having pre-empted a common Opposition strategy. How do you respond to this?

We have made it clear when discussion began about the presidential election that we could not share a platform with the BJP for a joint presidential candidate. This we could not share a platform with the BJP for a joint presidential candidate. This is taking into account the changed political situation in the changed political situation in the last two to three years. The situation is different from the last presidential election, when the BJP, I think, had a strength of two in the Lok Sabha. So we started this time with the premise that there can be no common 'all-in' Opposition candidate.

Do you fear having let the Congress(I) off lightly in the process? Despite all the talk about a consensus, the Congress(I) has acted unilaterally in the matter of nominating a candidate.

The Congress(I) had informed us, and various other opposition parties, about Dr Sharma' candidature. But we had wanted the presidential and vice-presidential nominee to be announced together. This demand of ours has no been accepted. We are not happy about that. But that dos not mean that we are against Dr Sharma's candidature. We had decided as early as May, in a Politburo meeting, that it is for the ruling party to propose names for both the presidential and vice-presidential posts. We would then see if these candidates are acceptable. If no, we would explore other options. It is not a question of letting the Congress(I) off the hook. If their nominee for the vice-presidency is not acceptable, we will explore other options.

But the Congress(I) has a clear majority in the electoral college of the vice-presidency. So your options in that regard may be foreclosed.

According to our calculations they have a majority for the presidency also. May be a narrow majority, but sufficient. We knew that we should intervene to prevent an understand beween the Congress(I) and the BJP. The presidency and vice-presidency are vital posts under the Constitution. A communal party having a say in the election to either, would jeopardise the integrity of these two posts.

But in the event, the Congress(I) proved disinclined to enter into any deal with the BJP....

I would think that this had something to do with the intervention of the Left. The stand adopted by the Left precluded the possibility of the Congress(I) and the BJP coming to an agreement. If we had taken the kind of stand we took at the time of the election of the Lok Sabha Speaker — that we would put up a candidate, come what may -then we would have given the BJP the opportunity to strike a deal with the Congress(I). Given our limited strength, we cannot really decide who should be President or Vice-President, or put up candidates of our own. So we worked out a strategy whereby we would support a candidate put up by the ruling party, provided he fulfilled certain criteria—he must have a secular and democratic outlook, and be prepare to uphold these values within the framework of the Constitution.

What if Dr Sharma had been a candidate as part of a package deal whereby some person thought to be appropriate by the BJP became Vice-President? Would Dr Sharma then have been acceptable to the CPI(M), despite meeting all your requirements in terms of personal attributes?

If Dr Sharma's candidature had been part of a package then we would have had to reconsider it. The considerations are not purely on the basis of an individual's attibutes—yes, individuals are very important. But also, it is the platform behind the candidature that matters. So that is why we went on an understanding that we should preven the emergence of a platform with a communal colouring.

What about your alliance with the National Front? In the presidential election you have chosen to go different ways. Do you think you could come together in future?

Yes, we could come together. Some sections of the media have projected this as a severe setback to the alliance, and predicted some sort of a realignment of forces. I do not think there is any basis for this kind of speculation. The CPI(M) and the Left parties have always had their independent identity, and on issues our views have diverged from those of our allies. But we have many things in come on and we could stress the common elements and work together.

The BJP has been lately making a lot of noises, saying that the CPI(M) has become his majesty's loyal Opposition. We are not worried by such charges. In practice, who is fighting the

Congress(I)? The June 16 strike was the largest protest action against the new economic policies after the Narasimha Rao Government came to power. Yet the BJP and its affiliated unions opposed the strike.

Your official organ (People's Democracy) has commented that it is 'unfortunate' that a section of the secular Opposition finds itself in the company of the BJP in sponsoring the candidature of professor G. G. Swell. Now. there was no conscious on the part of the National Front to sponsor the same candidate as the BJP. It as purely accidental that they ended up on the same side of the fence. If in the forthcoming session of Parliament, there are occasions when the National Front-Left viewpoint and the BJP's converge, and you neverthelss refrain from common action. wouldn't that take a great deal of pressure off the Congress(I) in a matter like the banking industry crisis.

The statement you mention (about the secular Opposition). has been made in the context of the experience of the last three years. Despite our repeated warnings in 1989, the Janata Dal entered into a partial understanding with the BJP. which helped the latter enormously. We do not want a repetition of that.

In the case of Parliament. we have firmly ruled out any floor coordination with BJP. There if we more certain motions and the BJP also concurrently does so it does not mean that we share their views. Suppose there is a no-confidence may be very different from the BJP's. But it might just happen that we vote together on the issue.

## 95 P.C. VOTING IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

An estimated 95 per cent of 4600-strong electoral college of MPs and MLAs today voted in the 10th presidential elections which is virtually a direct fight between the Congress nominee, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma. an the BJP-NF candidate. Prof G. G. Swell.

The day-long polling in Parliament House today to elect the ninth President was an orderly affair. Ninety-eight per cent of the members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha exercised their franchise.

Briefing newspersons after polling ended here at 5 p. m. the secretary-general of the Rajya Sabha and returning officer for the 10th Presidential election, Dr Sudarshan Agarwal, said 698 out of a total of 712 member of Parliament present in the Capital voted.

Giving the break-up, he said the actual strength of the two Houses of Parliament was 776 (Lok Sabha 543 and Rajya Sabha 233). There were 16 vacancies —11 in the Lok Sabha and five in the Upper House. A Shiv Sena Member of the Lower House, Mr. Moreshwa Save could not vote because of an order by the Supreme Court.

Besides, 47 MPs (34 from the Lok Sabha and 13 from the Rajya Sabha) had opted to vote wherever they were—outside the Capital. Another 14 MPs belonging to the JMM and RSP had not voted in keeping with their respective party's decision to abstain from taking part in the presidential election.

Four members of the assembly belonging to Uttar Pradesh. Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh cast their votes in Parliament House. They were Mr. N. D. Tiwari (UP). Mr Jagnnath Pahadia (Rajasthan). Mr Ajay Singh (MP) and Mr Praful Chandhra Sahai (Orissa).

Surprisingly. the JD MP in the house of elders. Mr Ram Jethmalani, one of the Presidential candidates who withdrew his candidature at the last minute. did not cast his vote.

The tally of the remaining 13 MPs who did not vote were Mr Tridib Choudhary and Mr. Soren Bhattacharaya (both RSP members of the Rajya Sabha). Out of the 11 others belonging to the Lok Sabha who also did not vote. eight belonged to the JMM. two to the BJP and a lone Congressman. the ailing Mr Abdul Ghafoor.

The JMM MPs who abstained were Mr. S. Mirandi. Mr. Shibu Soren. Mr. Suraj Mandal. Mr. Shilendra Mahto. Mr. Piyus Tirkey. Mr. Nani Bhattacharya. Mr. Sanat Mandal and Palas Barman. The two BJP members who could not take part in the voting were Mr Mahesh Konodia and Mahant Avidya Nath.

The Prime Minister. Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, was the first to exercise his franchise at the stroke of 10 a. m. when polling got under way. Accompained by the Parliamentary Affairs Minister.

Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad and others a visibly happy Mr. Rao posed for photographers before entering the room.

Mr. Agarwal said polling was very brisk in the first two hours when 570 out of a possible 712 MPs had exercised their franchise. Then began the lean period when in the remaining five hours the other 132 MPs walked in and cast their votes. In the first two hours, the pace of voting was frenetic with 100 votes being cast very 18 minutes.

Most of Mr Rao's cabinet colleagues and opposition stalwarts like Mr. Chandhra Shekhar, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and Dr Murli Manohar Joshi as well as Prof. G. G. Swell voted in the first hour itself.

Responding to questions, Mr. Agarwal said Prof. Swell and his polling agent were present when the ballot boxes were sealed. Prof Swell also come into the room several time to keep a Tab on the polling.

The fourth candidate in the fray, Kaka Joginder Singh "Dhartipakad' was seen hovering around the polling room. Though he is a non-starter he was trying to garner whatever support he could at the last minute by offering the voters dry fruits and sweet meats to the voters.

Dr Sharma was nowhere near the polling site. Besides, as Dr Sharma is not a member of Parliament he does not have a vote.

Mr. Agarwal said ballot boxes from the states would start arriving here tonight. It was expected that they reach the Capital by July 14 but a day's grace has been given for unforeseen exigencies. These ballot boxes would be brought by the returning or assistant returning officers aboard special aircraft and would be kept in Parliament House under tight security.

Mr. Agarwal said counting would begin at 11.30 a. m. on July 16 and would be held statewise. The result was expected to be announced that very evening depending on the time taken to finish the counting process.

**Bhopal:** As many as 308 of the 318 members of the state assembly and one Congress MP, Mr. Digvijay Singh, exercised their franchise for the ninth presidential election here today. With one

vacancy, the assembly has an effective strength of 319 but six members disqualified under the anti-deification law are not eligible to vote.

There was a prolonged confusion during the polling when Mr. Suresh Seth suspended Congress MLA discovered that someone had signed the voters' list against his name. This was enough to create an impression that a "bogus vote" had been cast. Mr. Seth lodged a formal complaint with the local presiding officer. Ultimately, the confusion was sorted out when it was discovered that another Congress MLA from Indore, Mr. Ashok Shukla, had signed against Mr. Seth's name by mistake as the two names appeared very close on the voters' list.

**Shillong:** All the 59 MLAs of the Meghalaya assembly exercised their franchise in the Presidential election. The Meghalaya House has 60 members but its effective strength is 59.

Meghalaya is the home state of one of the contestants. Prof. G. G. Swell.

Two MPs. Mrs. Margaret Alva, Union Minister of State for Personnel, and Mr. K. P. Singh Deo, who were the AICC observers. also cost their votes here.

**Thiruvananthapurm:** The Chief Minister, Mr. K. Karunakaran, was among the early voters in the presidential election.

Mr Karunakaran, came in a car and was taken in a lift to the first floor to the legislature complex where the voting was held. The Chief Minister had to be helped to the lift and to the room for voting by a nursing attendant, his gunman, the KPCC chief, Mr. Vyalar Ravi, and the Food Minister, Mr. T. H. Mustapha.

Of the 140 members in the state legislature, 137 cast votes. Two RSP members abstained, as per the party's decision to do so. One ruling front member and minister, Mr. T.M. Jacob, was away in America.

**Hyderbad:** All but three of the 288 eligible legislators from Andhra Pradesh voted in the Presidential election.

Legislators of two Naxalite factions boycotted the election. The lone MLA of the MCPI did not turn up. The Telugu Desam, the

CPI and the CPM contingents completed voting in the morning session. Most of the votes were cast by noon.

Of the 295 MLAs, a nominated member is not entitled to vote and one seat is vacant. Five others are not eligible on account of petitions.

**Patna**: Altogether 300 MLAs including nine Jharkhand Mukti Morcha rebels voted in the poll here.

Two Union ministers, Mr. C. K. Jaffar Sharief and Mr. Balram Singh Yadav, who were the AICC observers, also cast their vote here.

Commotion prevailed in the polling station when the Deputy Minister Mr. Nawal Kishore Bharati, faield to mark his preference on the ballot paper in the proper order. Mr. Bharti, perhaps inadvertently, marked his preference on the wrong side. The matter became serious when Mr. Bharati wanted to slip away with the ballot paper in his pocket. An alert Congress member, Mr. Rajo Singh, pointed this out to the Assistant Returning Officer a well as the Election Commission observers.

Only after the intervention of the Assistant Returning Officer did Mr. Bharati surrender his ballot paper. But he requested the Assistant Returning Officer to issue him a fresh ballot paper. At checking up election laws and rules, the official gave Mr. Bharati a fresh ballot paper to exercise his franchise.

**Bombay:** The state legislative assembly recorded 100 per cent turnout for the presidential election.

The Assistant Returning Officer or Maharashtra, Mr. Bhaskar Shetye, declared that all 277 MLAs and the there AICC observers. the Union ministers, Mr. Sitaram Kesri, Mr. B. Shankaranad and Mr. Rafiq Alam cast their votes.

There are four vacancies in the 288-member assembly and four Shiv Sena and three BJP MLAs have no voting rights due to pending election petitions.

**Lucknow:** As many as 414 of the 418 members of the UP assembly today cast their vote here amidst tight security.

The former Chief Minister and Congress leader, Mr. N. D. Tiwari, cast his vote in New Delhi. Two MLAs, Mr Madan Bhaiya (SJP) and Mr. Vijya Singh (Janata Dal) cast their votes through postal ballots from jail.

**Madras:** The Tamil Nadu.Chief Minister, Mr. J. Jayalalitha, was the first to cast her vote in the presidential election at the Secretariat this morning.

Barring the Finance Minister, Mr. V. R. Nedunchezian, who is convalescing the United Stated after heart surgery, the remaining members of the Jayalalitha cabinet and all the AIADMK MLAs cast their vote.

**Bhubaneswar**: In all, 143 of the 147 members of the Orissa assembly voted in the Presidential poll today.

The Information and Broadcasting Minister. Mr. Ajit Kumar Panja, who is an MP from West Bengal, also cast his vote at the polling booth in the Orissa assembly premises. He is the AICC observer for the poll.

Talking to reporters after casting his vote, Mr Biju Patnaik said: "Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma has already won".

**Gandhinagar:** As many as 168 legislators, out of an effective voting strength of 179 members, had cast their votes here till 12.15 p. m.

The Union Minister, Mr. R. L. Bhatia. also cast his vote here, as he had urged the election commission to permit him to vote in Gandhinagar.

**Calcutta:** In all, 250 out of 301 voters, including 294 MLAs and seven MPs, cast their votes by 12.30 p.m., official sources here said.

Seven members of Parliament, including the Union Civil Aviation Minister, Mr. Madhav Rao Scindia, besides, Mr. Buta Singh and Mr. R. K. Narayan, opted permission from the Election Commission to cast their votes in the assembly.

**Shimla:** Sixtyseven members out of the total of 68 members of Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha had cast their vote by 2.00 p. m.

Of the total of 68 members, 48 belong to ruling BJP, nine to the Congress and three each to the Janata Dal, the SJP and the Himachal Congress. The CPI has one member and there is one independent member.

**Chandigarh:** All the 90 members of the Haryana assembly cast their votes by 3.00 pm in the election.

Polling was wound up two hours before schedule. Mr Sher Singh, Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Commission, was among the first to cast their votes while the Chief Minister, Mr. Bhajan Lal was among the last few members to cast the votes.

**Guwahati:** In all 124 out of 126 members of the assembly cast their votes.

Mr. Chandulal Chandrakar, the Congress central observer for the parliamentary poll in Assam, also cast his vote here.

**Imphal:** All the 60 members of the Manipur assembly voted in today's polling, which ended at 11.30 a. m.

## SHANKAR DAYAL SHARMA ELECTED NEW PRESIDENT

Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma today romped home a comfortable winner in the tenth presidential elections when he defated his main opponent, Prof G. G. Swell, by polling about 65 per cent of the value votes in the electoral college comprising 4,601 members of Parliament and legislative assemblies.

The Presidnt-elect, Dr Sharma, will be formally sworn in as the republic's ninth Head of State at a ceremony to be held in Central Hall of Parliament on July 25. Thereafter he will drive in state to Rashtrapati Bhavan to assume charge of his new responsibilities.

During the day-long counting of votes at Parliamnt House Dr Sharma, who was the ruling party nominee, maintained a lead right from the BJP-NF-sponsored Prof Swell. Though Prof Swell put up a brave fight the end result was a foregone conclusion as the CPM, the CPI, the SJP and a number of small parties had also pledged support for Dr Sharma.

In a direct context, Dr Sharama polled 675, 864 value votes (about 64.78 per cent) while Prof Swell could muster only 346, 485

value votes (33.21 per cent) out of a total of 10, 43, 387 value votes. The fight of the two other candidates in the fray—Mr. Ram Jethmalani and Kaka Joginder Singh "Dhartipakad" —was only of academic interest. Even though Mr. Jethmalani had withdrawn from the contest at the last moment in favour of Prof Swell, he bagged 2,704 vote and "Dhartipakad" managed to secure mere 1,135 votes. At the end of four rounds of counting, the returning officer, Mr. Sudarshan Agarwal, also declared 17,199 value votes as invalid.

With today's defeat, "Dhartipakad" has taken yet another step forward in achieving his ambition of entering the Guiness Book of Records for having lost a presidential election the maximum number of times.

**Cross-Voting:** That there was some cross-voting in favour of Dr Sharma is evident from the fact that he polled about 974 value votes more than estimated by Congress observers sent to various states for mustering support for the Party candidate.

Dr Sharma bagged the support of 540 MPs, while Prof Swell was backed by 218 MPs as against the expected support of 258 MPs, indicating cross-voting by some BJP and NF MPs. As per the final results made available by the returning officer, Dr Sharma was supported by 2,355 MLAs and Prof Swell by 1,284 MLAs.

Among the non-Congress ruled states, Dr Sharma polled 520 value votes less than estimated by Congress observers in Madhya Pradesh, and 134 value votes less in West Bengal. This, an AICC general secretary attributed to the fact that 910 and 1057 value votes were declared invalid in MP and West Bengal, respctively.

However, in UP, Dr Sharma polled 1874 value votes more than estimated by Congress observers, in Arunachal Pradesh 24 value votes more, in Meghalaya (the home state of Prof. Swell) 17 value votes more, in Bihar 3132 value votes more, in Orissa 596 value votes more, in Rajasthan 766 value votes more, in Maharashtra 1400 value votes more, and in Himachal Pradesh 51 value votes more.

The number of invalid value votes in these states is as follows; 1040 in UP, 387 in Rajasthan, 298 in Orissa, 175 in Maharashtra, 102 in Himachal Pradesh, and 174 in Bihar.

While in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh Dr Sharma got 40128 and 20192 value votes, respectively, as per estimates of Congress obervers, figures of estimates for other states were not available with the AICC office here.

This presidential election was different from the earlier ones in that the Janata Dal threw up a demand for the first time that a person belonging to SC/ST should be elected to the highest office in the county. This demand while found favour from the BJP, which supported Prof Swell who belong to a scheduled tribe of Meghalaya, created fissures in the NF-LF alliance with the CPM and the CPI, and the Forwad Bloc deciding to back Dr Sharma stressing that caste should not be the sole criterion in choosing a candidate for the highest office but public standing and secular credentials.

The President, Mr R. Venkatraman, was the first to congratulate Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma on his election as the country' ninth President.

Mr Venkataraman will lay down office on July 24 and Dr Sharma will be sworn in the next day as the President.

Mr G. G. Swell, the losing Presidential candidate, called on Dr Sharma and conveyed his congratulations to him.

Asked by news person what he had told Dr Sharma, a smiling Mr. Swell said: "I congratulated him. He is a gentleman.

Mr Swell also thanked the MPs and MLAs who had voted for him.

# 5

# Nawab Yar Mohammad Khan (1726-1742)

On the death of Dost Mohammad Khan, the noble placed Sultan Mohammad, a boy of eight, on the Masnad. The news, however, reached Nizamul-Mulk who communicated it to Yar Mohammad Khan. The latter replied, "The shadow of your Highness's protection on my head supplied the place of my revered father. Of what consequence is the death of one foreign Pathan? These words pleased the Nizam who bestowed on him robes of honour, a fish insignia, drums and banners, an elephant, a charger, palanquins, umbrella, sunscreen and other insignia of sovereignty, with the titles of Amir and Nawab and supplying him troops, allowed him to depart for Bhopal". No opposition was made at his entry in Bhopal and he easily dispossessed Sultan Mohammad Khan and himself become the ruler of Bhopal and granted him an estate in JAGIR.

Despite these, Yar Mohammad Khan never actually assumed the title of Nawab. Major Henley mentions that it was arranged that when-ever Sultan Mohammad entered DURBAR, Yar Mohammad should rise to receive him to sit with him on the MASNAD during his visit. He made Islamnagar his capital and decorated it with stately and magnificent building. He was also ambitious like his father and very soon extended his territories by acquiring possession of Udaipur, Sewans and Pathari.

He also fought against the Amirs of Kotah and Bundi and came out victorious thereby receiving a large indemnity from them.

Marhattas had a contest with Yar Mohammad Khan in which many lives were lost (December 1735).[1] The Maratha were in dire

need of money as they were deep in debt which was to be repaid. his compelled them to make inroads into Malwa for collecting the dues.

In 1937, "no sooner did the forces of the Nizam leave Sironj than Yar Mohammad Khan once again made friend with the Marhattas and promised to pay up his remaining dues, requesting however, that his territories might not be devastated. On his way to the Deccan the Peshwa was at Dhamuni on May 29, and hence he hastened towards the Deccan".[2]

In 1939, the Nizam was defeated by Baji Rao near Bhopal. This latter strengthened his position in Malwa by coming to an understanding with other Marhattas general on a scheme of partitioning the Maghal Provinces among the rival Marhatta general as their "spheres of influence.".[3]

Their relations were more or less in the nature of a contract which made them bound to leave territories of the Prince unmolested if the Marhatta dues were not regularly paid. The settlements with Yar Mohammad Khan of Bhopal and the Maharao of Kotah give us good examples of Marhata policy. In many cases he dues could not be paid regularly, and force had to be brought to bear on a Prince to make him pay, but it could be done only when the Marhatta generals found their hands free of any engagements elsewhere.[4]

In the wars with Rampura, Brikhban and Karoda, Yar Mohammad Khan captured a large number of men, women and children. A maiden of matchless beauty of Rajput or Brahmin family fascinated him and later on became his wife and rose to great honour.

Major Willim Hough writes in his book. A Brief History of the Bhopal Principality". (pp. 17-18) thus:—

."The history of this extra-ordinary princess who lived to the advanced age of 80, and who for more than half a century greatly influenced, if she did not control, the councils of Bhopal, is very extraordinary....She came from upper Hindustan. Though never publicly married to the Nawab Yar Mohammad, she considered as her own, and the title of Majee Sahiba or Lady Mother, which was give to her by them and all others, proves the respect in which she was held. From the account given of her conduct, under the most trying

circumstances, it seems difficult to pronounce whether she was most remarkable for the humanity of her disposition or the excellence of her judgement. She was beloved and respected by all."

Somerset Playe writes in his book. "The Bombay Presidency, the U. P. and the Punjab etc." (p. 872):

"The history of the Bhopal State Shows...there was an usual failure of male hair to succeed on the death of rulers and on several occasions a widow of Nawab not only acted as regent but was also the actual head of the State. Mamula, the relic of Yar Mohammad Khan who died in 1779 was a woman of great intellectual power and proved to be a wise administrator for about fifty years."

Sir George Mac Munn in "Indian States and Princes" (p. 213) remarks: Her position was due not only to her young personality, but to the fact that the ruling Nawabs during her regime were mere ciphers, religious recluses with no inclination to Government. The Begum's firm rule probably saved the State".

Nawab Yar Mohammad also came into clash with Peshwa's army at Burban Bethah and with intrepidity forced them to leave the battle ground.

Nawab Yar Mohammad Khan ruled for fifteen year. He died in 1742 and was buried in Islamnagar where his tomb is still standing. He left behind five sons, Faiz Mohammad, Hayat Mohammad, Sayyed Mohammad, Hasan Mohammad, Yasin Mohammad and four daughters.

It is said about the Nawab that "when Nizamul-Mulk with all the pomp and show attaching to his high station, accompanied the Marhttas against the fort of Bhopal, Yar Mohammad Khan, rule of the place who was celebrated for his courage, by dint of great bravery and deter mination expelled Nizamul-Mulk out of his possessions without sustaining any injury from the insurgents. Many nobles and other respectable people, on account of the ravage and desolation, committed in the Imperor's dominions by the enemy, found protection in this territory and lived in peace and tranquallity under the KHANS just rule....It was here that he (John Dowson) found Islam to be predominent, under the good management of this equitable chief of the people of this territory were perfectly secure

from the ravages of the tyrants. For his surpassing courage and wish administration of the country he received great favours from the throne and was honoured with the rank of 5000 personal and 5000 horse, together with the insignia of MAHI AND MARATIB".[5] MAHI MARATAB",[6] the dignity of the Fish, one of the highest honour of the Moghal Empire. This is still the Court of arms of the Ruler of the Bhopal."[6] This was, however, supplanted bylion with banyan tree with effect from 1950 sometimes after the merger of the State with the Indian Union.

## FAIZ MOHAMMAD KHAN
## (1742—1777)

On the death of Yar Mohammad Khan, his eldest son, Faiz Mohammad Khan, who was eleven years old, succeeded to the throne with the aid and assistance of Diwan Bijai Ram. It so happened that Sultan Mohammad Khan, the brother of he deceased Nawab proclaimed himself as a ruler and obtained possession of Fatehgarh fort at Bhopal. Bijai Ram emerged from Islamnager with a force of 5000 men and met and routed the forces of Sultan Mohammad Khan and compelled him to fly from Bhopal who took refuge with Nawab Izza Khan, Chief of Kurwai and then fled to Rahatgarh (where the Governor opened the gates to him) and began to collect the material of war. Bijai Ram had to advance and besiege Rahatgarh, but on the counsel of Maji Mamula, the widow of Yar Mohammad Khan, Nawab Faiz Mohammad Khan agreed to bestow Rahatgarh and the surrounding district upon Sultan Mohammad as a Jagir provided the latter and his brother renounced all claims in Bhopal. This was duly ratified by them.

The fort of Raisen (22 miles east of Bhopal) was held by Noid Ali Khan Khowaja Sara, commandant in the service of Alamgir the second. Owing to feebleness of the Imperial Government, he assumed independent rule of Raisen. Nawb Faiz Mohammad Khan attacked Raisen, a fight took place in which the Imperial Governor was slain. Nawab also sent a petition to Delhi explaining the position. In reply he was thanked and Farman was granted making over the Fort formally to the Nawab.

About 1745, the Peshwa whose capital was Poona entered Bhopal territory. He gained support from some local influential people as well as from the brother of Nawab Yar Mohammad Khan who persuaded hi.n to launch an attack. The Bhopal army was unable to resist the onslaught of Marathas and so on the advice of Maji Mamola the parganas of Ashta, Devi-pura, Doraha, Ichhawar, Bhilsa*Shujalpur and Sehore were ceded to them.

In 1763, the Peshwa renewed the settlement of lands made nine years before with the State. During these years, the dues of the States were being paid regularly. In 1753 itself the fort of Bhilsa was taken back by the Bhopal State nd thereafter it continued to be in its hand.[7]

Afterward, Bhao Jhanko and Biswas Rao passed near Bhopal on their way to meet Ahmad Shah Abdali and threatened to punish the Nawab on their return from Delhi as he had faild to visit them when summoned. The battle of Paniput (Jan. 6, 1777) however, saved the State from their design as it had resulted in their crushing defeat at the hands of Ahmad Shah Abdali.

Diwan Bijai Ram expired in 1762. "He was a man of talents, and the country of Bhopal attained a state of considerable prosperity under his management. He conciliated the Gonds."[8]

Now Ghansi Ram was appointed Diwan of Bhopal State. He was unpopular amongst the gentry of the State as he meted out discriminating treatment to the Muslims, forbade the killing of king and maltreated the Pathan nobles. At last he was put to death by two pathans. He was succeeded by Gairat Khan who was also poisoned after six years of office. Later on, Lala Kesri, a Kayest was made a Diwan. He was an able administrator and managed the State for fourteen years. He was also slain by a confederacy of Pathans led by the Nawab's younger brother. Subsequently, Yasin Mohammad Khan succeeded to the office of Minister of State. Nawab Faiz Mohammad Khan died of dropsy on December 12, 1777.

"The revenue of Bhopal at this time amounted to about twenty lakhs of rupees, of which a portion of five lakhs were allotted in Jagir for the support of the Nawab. With this the minister had no concern; it was managed in an office separate from those of the State; and the revenue collected was appropriated according to the

pleasure of the Prince; but beyond this, he had his personal attendants, were considered to have a further claim on the State territory, or any concern with State affairs."[9]

The Nawab was held to be a saint, he was given to prayers and fasting and was of courteous and forbearing nature. He took no interest in the administration of the State which he had left mostly to the discretion of Mamola Sahiba and the able Diwan Bijai Ram who kept the Gonds in subjection and strived to set the house in order.*

## HAYAT MOHAMMAD KHAN (1771-1808)

Nawab Faiz Mohammad Khan had died childless, so his brother Hayat Mohammad Khan succeeded to the throne with the moral assistance of the lady Mamola and other dignitaries of the State. Nawab Faiz Mohammad Khan's widow Salaha (known as Bahoo Begum) wished herself to be invested with the reins of the Government.

Rivalries had sprung up, on the one side Nawab Hayat Mohammad Khan was a claimant for the Masnad, while on the other was Sharief Mohammad Khan. The latter was particularly on the look-out to create chaos to achieve his end. Under the circumstances the lady Mother Mamola advised Bahoo Begum to choose a man from amongst the brothers of the late chief to be the head of the State. Accordingly, Nawab Hayat Mohammad Khan was made her Deputy. After some months the latter discarding the arrangement became all powerful and assumed the title and powers of Nawab.

Nawab Hayat Mohammad Khan was a religious recluse by nature. He got four boys converted to Islam: Jamshed Khan, an Ahir; Islam Khan, a Brahmin; Chota Khan, Nawab raised Faulad Khan to the post of Diwan who proved to be an able administration despite Bahoo Begum's attempt to assert her authority. Bahoo Begum was universally detested because of her harsh treatment.

At this time Colonel Goddard marched through Bhopal on his way to Bombay. He was highly gratified with the hospitality of the Nawab and gave him a letter to the effect that "the friendship between the East India Company and Bhopal would receive assistance at the Company's hands". The Nawab remained faithful

to his promises towards the Britishers, though under no treaty obligations.

It so happened that Faulad Khan quarrelled with Lady Mother Mamola and in consequence was slain by a member of the royal family. Chota Khan was appointed Diwan who cemented bonds of friendship with the great Marhatta chiefs, set free 400 Pindaris[10] from prison, giving each man a Pagri and some money on account of this generous treatment they never entered Bhopal during his tenure of office.

Chota Khan's ministry was displeasing to the Bahoo Begum who taunted and instigated Sharief Mohammad whom she promised to give monetary aid but that promise was never materialised. Sharief Mohammad, however, raised a large army, advanced towards Gunnourgarh whose commandant was in good term with him, A fight took place with State forces in which Sharief Mohammad was defeated. He then marched towards Bhopal. A fierce fight took place at Phanda again with forces dispatched by Chota Khan which resulted in utter discomfiture, and the dispersal of his troops and loss of his life and his six brothers.

After this event, Chota Khan tightened up his control over the Pathans and began to harass them. Pathan nobles combined themselves under the leadership of Najat Mohammad Khan. On Idul Fitter when Nawab went to pay respects to Mamola Bibi, Najat complained to Nawab against Chota Khan's maltreatment and urged his dismissal. Nawab was enraged and refused to accede to the request telling that Chota Khan's conduct was above reproach. Hearing this, Najat Mohammad drew a dagger and assaulted the Nawab. Luckily, the chobdar, Paras Ram had overheard all this and struck Najat with his mace and other officers also came on the scene and despatched Najat altogether. This compelled Chota Khan to establish an espionage system in the city and to remove most of the Pathans from offices of trust and thus restored law and order in the State.

Chota Khan also surrounded Bhopal with fortified posts. (These fortifications were, however, demolished afterwards in 1947 in pursuance of a tow planning scheme). He also built a stone dam "Pukhata Pul" or stone bridge which holds up the waters of the

lower lake. He also improved Fatehgarh Fort and built a palace therein for his own residence where at present the Hamidia Hospital is housed. The whole fort area had been dedicated by Nawab Hamidulla Khan Sahib after the formation of New Madhya Pradesh, for the hospital purpose.

During the year 1795 Chota Khan died at 40 years of age. Though a muslaim convert, he looked like a Hindu in manners and disposition.

Ameer Mohammad Khan succeeded his father Chota Khan as Diwan. His behaviour was crude, harsh, and tyrannical. So he was dismissed by the Nawab. Thereupon, he attempted to fire other city by shutting himself at Fatehgarh fort. He was forced to flee from there and went to Nagpur, and made an abortive attempt to capture Bhopal with Raghuji Bhonslas' aid.

A clerk, Himmat Ram was then made the minister of the State and the title of Raja was conferred on him.

When such disturbing conditions were prevailing in the State, Wazir Mohammad Khan (son of Sharief Mohammad Khan) coming from Rajgarh sought audience with the Nawab. The Nawab met him and when assured of his friendly sentiments embarrased him and hailed him as the future saviour of his country.

The Nawab contemplated to make him minister, but this move was opposed by his son, Gaus Mohammad Khan and his mother. Asmat Begum as they dreaded that Wazier Mohammad Khan would take revenge of his father's death. Thereupon, the Nawab succumbed to their wishes and appointed Munir Mohammad Khan, son of Sultan Mohammad Khan of Rahatgarh as the State.

Murid arrived Bhopal escorted by 1000 followers, encamped at his father's garden and embraced the trees planted by his ancestors and began to weep and mourn. In his interview with the Nawab he exhibited fulsome flattery and his conduct towards the others was differential and most submissive.

This was looked down upon by the Pathan nobles. He started by oppressing the widow of Bijai Ram and also Himmet and his nephew Kuali Ram (whom he released after realising Rs. 10,000). The State was overrun by Pindaris and dacoits of every description.

Military expenditure could not be curtailed. Murid extorted as much money as he could be way of house taxation and State loans.

Next he called on Asmat Begum for pecuniary aid to meet the expences of the troops which she refused blank. Thereupon he beckoned to his accomplices who put her to death and he shut himself up in the Fatehargh fort. Because of his tyranny "people used to party with uncovered heads at midnight for deliverance from him."

Murid also plotted against Gaus Mohammad Khan and Wazier Mohammad Khan and wrote a letter to Rahim Khan, governor of Bari to put Wazier Mohammad Knan to death. This letter was, however, intercepted by Wazier Mohammad Khan who attacked Rahim and occupied the fort.of Gunnour and the post of Gurha.

Nawab Hayat Mohammad Khan sent for Kuli Khan and tipped him for ministership. Wazier Mohammad Khan also joined Kuli Khan. Murid was frequtened by these manoeures and called in the assistance of Bala Rao Anglia, Governor of Sirojin Gawalior territory who encamped with 30,000 men near Idagh and demanded one of the forts of Bhopal. Murid after appointing Amir Khan at Fatehgarh fort proceeded to Islamnagar where they received resistance from Kildar. Hence he made his war towards Raisen which was surrendered. After a month Bala Rao reappeared and encamped on the plains of Govindpura. A bloody battle took place in which Wazir Mohammad, Khan showed his matchless valour. Scindia's army retreated and Rao and Murid field to Sironj.

Bala Rao then imprisoned Murid to extort money from him and the latter put an end to his life by swallowing diamond dust. But Bala Rao took it to be a shamming death and did not permit his burial until decomposition set in.

Then Nawab Hayat Mohammad appointed Wazier Mohammed Khan as a minister with full powers and authority. His seal bore the motto "God is the king of Mohammad Wazier".

Wazier Mohammad Khan besieged Raisen. It's governor Bhanbul had to come to terms with him and evacuate the fort on receipt of Rs 30,000.

Lateron, Wazier Mohammad Khan led his forces to Ambapani and imprisoned Kuli Khan in Raisen fort, but Nawab Hayat

Mohammad Khan released him and restored his estate. Kuli Khan also tipped the commander of the Hoshangabad fort and occupied it. A State force was despatched to Hoshangabad which after removing some resistance reoccupied it.

Wazir Mohammad made alliance with the Pindaris leaders, Karim Khan and Chitu and granted Chihpaner to the latter for his residence. Ashta, Sehore, Doraha, and Iohchawor were annexed to Bhopal, while Shujalpur. Berasia and Bhilsa were laid under tribute. The financial condition of the State, was, however, not sound. Revenue collections amounted to Rs. 50,000 only and Wazier was forced to obtain funds as best as he could to endeavour to make his army support itself. The system of indiscriminate violence, which appears on the first view of confound all rights and property, and to attain its ends, by any expedient, was nevertheless, not without its distinctions.[11]

Ghaus Mohammad Khan was frightened at the growing power and influence of Wazier. He persuaded his father to transfer the ministership to Akbar Khan who proved inefficient and weakling. Differences came to a head and a fight ensued at Bishenksera between the supporters of Gaus Mohammad Khan and Wazier.

Ghaus Mohammad Khan then invited Mohamma Shah Khan from Siaronj and Karim Khan Pindari from Shujalpur to Islamnagar and Wazier was compelled to retire temporarily but appeared again when there commenced a scuffle between Karim Khan and Shah Khan. The Nawab then appalled to Scindia for succour against Wazier and promised the fort of Islamnagar and 4 lakhs in cash, besides a yearly payment of Rs. 61,000. Scindia captured the fort of Islamnagar and sent Hakim Asad Ali to reduce Bhopal. Somehow by hospitality and deference Wazier kept Hakim in good humour. Hakim brought about reconciliation and compromise between Wazier and the Nawab and made his way to Gwalior. Wazir Mohammad Khan then had a free hand to reorganise the administration on a sound footing. Nawab Hayat Mohammad Khan continued to live in his palace but took no active part in the affairs of the State. He died on 6th November, 1808 at the age of 73 and duly succeeded by Ghaus Mohammad Khan.[12]

## GHAUS MOHAMMAD KHAN (1808-1809)

Ghaus Mohammad Khan after the death of his father became the Nawab but the real power kept on being wielded by Wazier Mohammad Khan. The Nawab contrived to snatch powers from him. Wezier Mohammad Khan was famous for firmness and bravery and had collected a large following of kindred spirit. The name of his horse was "Punkhraj" (king of birds) and its tail was cut off. He was handsome, faultless and fast horse and earned for Wazier Mohammad Khan the sobriquet of the rider of the tallies horse (Banda Ghore wala Nawab)

With the connivance of Ghaus Mohammad Khan, Sadiq Ali, the General of the Nagpur Chief, seized Chainpur Bari and advanced to Bhopal punish Wezier Mohammad Khan. Wazier Mohammad Khan took refuge in the fort of Gunnour. Sadiq Ali demanded from the Nawab he surrender of Wazier's wife and children residing with the Nawab. The latter made over Moiz Mohammad Khan and Sadiq Ali and leaving a small continent made his way to Nagpur. Wazier Mohammad Khan remained quiet for some days and then sallied forth from Gunnour, turned out Nagpur forces from Bhopal and took the Nawab seriously to task. The latter made reconciliance by throwing the blame on some of his councellors who were ultimately put to death.

Moiz Mohammad Khan was treated as a guest and after a year was returned with a dress of honour, the Raja himself escorted him six miles on the way.

About this time Nawab Ameer Khan,[13] the Chief of Tonk while passing near Bhopal for Nagpur expedition sought the alliance of Wazier Mohammad Khan. The latter accompanied him. Nagpur army came out successful Amir Khan fled away but Wazier Mohammad Khan rallying his troops attacked with valour and impetuousity drove them out of the field.

Wazier Mohammad Khan induced Ghaus Mohammad Khan to retire to Raisen, leaving the State practically in his hands. Since then the rule of the state passed to Wazier's line of descendants.

Wazier Mohammad Khan was at once on object of terror and of calumny at the Marhatta court, particularly a horse of Nagpur and

Gawalior. Their efforts to destroy him, had driven him to have recourse to every means for the preservation of himself, and is country; but, forgetting that they were the real authors of the condition in which he was placed, they represented him as the willing associate of the Pindaris, the patron of plunderers, and the chief enemy to the restoration of peace in Central India...An agreement was made between Scindia and the Rajah of Nagpur for the reduction of Bhopal. The very terms of Agreement betrayed the real object; for Bhopal when conquerred, was to be made over to the Nagpur Rajah".

## WAZIER MOHAMMAD KHAN (1809-1816)

In 1811, Wazier Mohammad made on abortive attempt to win over the Britishers and Inayat Masih was sent to the Resident at Nagpur. Wazir also sent an agent to Colonel Close indicating that he was driven for reasons of self-preservation to join the Pindaris and reminded him of his past relation with Colonel Goddard in 1778.

In 1812, Scindias' General, Jugu Bapu twice attacked Bhopal, the ostensible reason being delay in the payment of the tribute money. Nagpur troops also joined. They were been upon the complete overthrow of the Bhopal principality.

Wazier Mohammad Khan had a reserve of 500 men under his own command to petrol the city and render assistance at any threatened point,while the forces were posted on various gates. "The Nagpur army made a breach in he Itwara and Gunnorie gates and effected a lodgement in the city, but the Pathan women received them with such showers of stone and brickbats from the roofs that they lost heart and retreated, and Wazier Mohammad Khan having chased them from the Itwara Gate to the Mungalwara Gate, re-entered by the Gunnori Gate and completed their discomfiture and was loud in his praises of the women's bravery". He drew a happy presage that the place was not destined to fall into the hands of the besiegers. Due to acute scarcity of grains and fodder and the pestilence that had broken out, the siege was withdrawn. In this crisis the resourcefulness of Wazier Mohammad Khan was also put to the best account and saved Bhopal.

Daulat Rao Scindia was very much enraged at the return of his army. He further despatched another contingent of troops at the head of Sir John Baptiste an Jaswant Rao Marhatta. Wazier sought the aid of Sir John Ochterlony at Delhi stating his friendship with Colonel Goddard together with some presents and curiosities. Luckily, a quarrel crept in between the two generals of Scindia's army which borough them into daggers drawn with one another. In the mean time,from Delhi a favourable reply came which cemented the relationship and stopped Scindia from its evil designs against Bhopal. "Wazier Mohammad Khan had derived no small benefit from these arrangements; he was considered to be under the protection of Calcutta and interference in his behalf was sufficient to guarantee him from further molestation, but the danger being past, he cooled down in his desire to establish definite relations with the supreme Government, and the latter perceiving that events in Central India now took a less acute form, while British arms were again in the ascendent in Nepal, countermanded the military arrangements which had been made and dropped the negoiations with Bhopal."[14]

It was stipulated in Maharaje Scindias' treaties with the Company, "thát the Maharaja may take tribute from them according to his pleasure and that the British Government has no connection with the country of Malwa." Bhopal was a part of Malwa, and from ancient times subject to the Peshwa..., Technically, Scindia had a strong case; Bhopal was his dependent, and admitted as much. But the Governor General was now one who cared little about technicialities...He regarded Scindia as the head and front of all offence and the Company's principal menace, and he was resolute to find some fairly reputable casus belli to break his power once for all."[15]

Wazier Mohammad Khan proceeded to Raisen and made an expedition to Tunirawan and fell ill there. He want on as far as Deori where he died on March 16, 1816.

Though as remarkable for prowess and valour as the most desperate of Afghan race, he was in manners mild and pleasing, and there was in his disposition a sternness that inspired awe. He latterly gave way to habits of dissipation, which were believed to have shortened his existence".

## NAZAR MOHAMMAD KHAN (1816-1819)

Wazier Mohammad Khan had chosen his younger son, Nazar Mohammd Khan to be his successor as the elder son was indolent and took no interest in the affairs of the State. Nazar Mohammad was acknowledged as chief with the title of "Nawab Naziruddaula". During his regime which was short-lived he affected great improvements in the administration of the State and the army. By persistent endeavours, he at last succeeded in entering into a pact with the British Government and found place in good books of British officers. By now Gaus Mohammad Khan was relegated to the background without any semblance of power and authority in State matters. He lived peacefully on the income of an estate granted to him for maintenance. On February 28, 1818 Nazar Mohammad Khan was married to Gauhor Begum (Qudsia Begum) daughter of Nawab Ghaus Mohammad Khan.

The province the Treaty were as follows:—

(1) There shall be perpetual friendship, alliance, and unity of interest between the British Government and the principality of Bhopal and the friends and enemies of one party shall be the friends and enemies of both.

(2) The British Government will guarantee and protect the principality of Bhopal against all enemies.

(3) Bhopal will acknowledge the supremacy of the British and will not have any connection with other chiefs or State without the knowledge and sanction of the British Government.

(4) Bhopal will not commit aggression on any one if, by accident disputes arise with any one, they shall be submitted to the arbitration award of the British Government.

(5) Bhopal will furnish a contingent of 600 horses and 400 infantry for the service of the British Government and when necessary the whole of Bhopal forces shall join the British army.

(6) The British troops are to be a all times admitted into the Bhopal territory and Bhopal shall afford every facility in obtaining supplies.

(7) The Nawab and his heirs and successors shall remain absolute rulers of their country and the jurisdiction of the British Government shall not in any manner be introduced into that principality.

(8) The British Government grants to the Nawab an successors in perpetuity the five Mohals of Ashta, Ichhawer, Sehore, Doraha and Debipura to beheld by them in exclusive authority.

Further a secret clause promised that the Company would try to get back for the State territory occupied by the Pindaris or taken by Scindia and given to Pindaris leaders."

Nawab faithfully maintained his engagements; moreover, he co-operated usefully with Col. Adams...and colonized some of the waste lands. His goodwill was rewarded by increase of territory so that the little state rose to political importance in Malwa and acquired a revenue sufficient to maintain a high position and to exercise a considerable influence in Central India."[17] Nothing in the whole and on of British friendship, as the conduct of its Government to Boondee and Bhopal."[18]

Nazar Mohammad Khan was an enlightened Nawab. He was accidentally killed in November 1819 by the discharge of a pistol:

Nawab Nazar Mohammad Khan possessed a grand personality and was brave and honourable and devoted his energies to the service of the State. In the words of C. U. Aitchison he was "a gallant solider an enlightened ruler, and a firm ally of the British government."

Malcolm writes:—"Nazar Mohammad held in just detestation the vices and indulgences to which some Mohammadans are addicted. His Harem contained but one princess, and no slaves. He was a good Mohammadan, but so far removed from begotry, that his favourite companion and minister, was a christian, by name Shahzad Musseh". He was fond of mechanics; and could himself take to pieces and put together a watch, with the principles of construction

of which he was well-acquainted"...He struggle with his father to preserve a country rendered dearer from the extreme misery to which it was reduced".[19]

Nawab Nazar Mohammad left the following will:—"The well-wishers and dignitaries of the State should carry out their duties in the same excellent manner as they have performed them during my administration. They should look upon my wife Nawab Qudsia Begum as their rule, and obey her orders, an when my daughter Sikandar Begum attains to years of discretion she should be married to one of my relatives of equal position. Her husband shall be called the Nawab of Bhopal".[20]

## SIKANDAR BEGUM (1819-1837)

**(1st Period)**

On the death of Nazar Mohammad Khan, Gohar Begum was invested with the supreme authority in the State by the Political Agent in Bhopal. "Nawab Qudsia Begum" was engraved upon the seal. It was also decided the husband of Sikandar Begum should be acknowledged as the Chief of the State.

Further, on the advice of the Political Agent, an agreement was concluded with Nawab Munir Mohammad Khan (grandson of Wazier Mohammad Khan) that his father Amer Mohammad Khan would be obedient to Qudsia Begum and that he would not meddle with the affairs of the State after which the Nawab Sikander Begum was formally betrothed to Nawab Munir Mohammad Khan. Afterwards, Qudsia Begum broke off the match on a false allegation of impotence, against the bride-groom, Munir Mohammad took up arms. The fight lasted for four days. The up-short was that Munir gave up his estate of Rs. 44,000 a year, while his younger, Nawab Jehangir Mohammad Khan was selected as a husband for Sikender Begum with the title of "Nawab Nazeerud-Dauai Shamsher Jang" and commonly known as Nawab-Dula".

Qudsia Begum also executed a bond which ran as follows:—

"As Sikande; Begum has been betrothed to Jehangır Mohammd Khan the State, its Government, and all the duties pertaining there to have been entrusted to him, therefore, both of my

children are owners of the State. The best thing for him is to please and obey me. The ceremony of marriage will be carried out at a suitable time".[21]

When Jehangir Mohammad Khan grew up, he visited Lord W. Bentinok at Saugar for the grant of administrative powers. He blame Qudsia Begum for delaying the celebrations of marriage. The matters came to head when Mr. Wilkinson arrived at Bhopal and informed Qudsia Begum that he would not return to Sehore till he had heard the sound of drums proclaiming the Nawab's marriage, failing which she should incur the displeasure of the Governor General. Qudsia Begum had to yield to in wildly nilly and so the marriage was solemnised on April 17, 1835 with great rejoicings. Later on, Nawab Jehangir Mohammad Khan gave a sealed undertaking, both on behalf of himself and his adherents to act in subordination to Qudsia Begum's wishes.

Wilkinson (political agent in Bhopal) in his diary has this much to say concerning the later developments:

"In 1835, the Nawab signed a Deed, acknowledging his rights to be derived wholly from his marriage with her, and engaging to obey her in all things, never to marry any other woman, nor even to keep a concubine; to allow her free liberty to remain outside the Purdah, and to get the Agenr's countersignature to this Deed".

"But the Begum (Kudsia) now beings to manifest frequent symptoms of furious passion approaching to insanity. She ride and walks about in public, and betrays her determination to maintain herself in power by learning the use of the spear and other manly accomplishments. At times she became quite frantic; and as one of soldiers observe, more terrible to approach than a tigress. On these occasions her servants were greeted with abuse too gross for repetition."

"When her daughter after her marriage, began to reside with the Nawab, she did the imprudence to ask her if she also had joined the Nawab to set her aside. On one occasion, in the rains, she started on food on a pilgrimage to Mecca, apprising only a single Sepoy of her interntions, and waded her way throughout the mud as far as Funda, half way between Bhopal and Sehore, where she was

overtaken by the Minister. It took them three days to persuade her to abandon her mad project".

In 1835, Qudsia Begum endeavoured to get a dancing girl, by name Nootan, to denounce the Nawab to be impotent, but neither threats nor confinement succeeded with this woman, who, on her release, proclaimed to the Nawab and the public, and also stated in a petition to the Agent, the means used by the Begum to export the false charge".

"The intrigues of Secander Bee with Osman Khan, the son of the Tonk Chief's general, Muhamood Khan, are exposed and cause great scandal".[22]

It is quite possible that some of the observations and statements made by Wilkinson in the above account might have been the product of biased attitude. Many other sources confirm that Begum Qudsia was a perfectly normal lady, though her progressive outlook and enlightened ideas were not to the liking of those whom she had to move with. It is also possible that Wilkinson might have received highly coloured and exaggerated accounts of the actual facts from his sources of information. It would he advisable thereby to take in the statements of Wilkinson after leaving the necessary margin for such possibilities.

In a few days time, Nawab applied to be invested with the sovereign power. Secret information reached Begum that armed soldiers were hidden in the city and attacking party was garrisoned outside. The two Begums seen Kuli Khan with 30 horsemen of the "Yaka" their own body guard which frustrated that plans of the plotters. Mr. Wilkinson admonished the Nawab in sympathetic and mild terms. This did not pacify the Begum who pressed the British Government to take stern action against the Nawab. A conference as subsequently arranged by the Political Agent in which Begum's representatives urged that the powers of the State should be handed over to the Nawab after a period of ten years, while Nawab's party wanted powers after three years. This resulted in a deadlock.

On 1st April, 1837, the Nawab managed to escape to Sehore where he raised troops and seized the districts of Doraha, Devipura and Jharkhera and also fort of Ashta. A fight ensued with Begum's

forces where in 300 persons were killed and wounded. The Nawab was forced to retirt into the fort which was besieged. After sometime the seige was let off under instructions of the Political Agent and recociliation was brought about. Sikander begum went to Sehore to bring her husband back to Bhopal. Qudsia Begum had to surrender the administration of the State to Nawab Jehangir Mohammd Khan. She was granted an estate of 16½ villages, the revenues of which amounted to Rs. 498,642/8/. The term of the Agreement were as below:

(1) That the Jagir of the Begum with customs rights will remain in her possession as before. She will not interfere in matters of State whatever the circumstances may be and she will not conspire against the Nawab.

(2) Nawab Sikanda Begum will act in obedience to the wishes of her husband and the Nawab with a clean heart and true love will treat her with devotion and regard.

(3) Nawab Moiz Mohammad Khan and Mian Faujdar Mohammad Khan will not interfere in the administration of the state. The Agreement was attested by the British Government on 15th January 1838. (Appendix no. 1)

Qudsia Begum then practically retired from the political life in favour of Jehangir Mohammad Khan. In 1877, on the occasion of the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi, she was decorated with the order of the Imperial Cross. She died in 1881. She was an able, wise and generous ruler and made good arrangements for the supply of food and military stores to the army and spent lavishly on the treatment of the wounded and the care of the dependent so the fallen soldiers. She was very fond of exercise and loved walking. She would enter the tenements of the poor people and enquire about their welfare. She was fond of riding and owned well-bred horses, elephants, palanquins and carriages. She used to entertain European and Indian ladies.

Qudsia Begum was very regular in her daily prayers which she performed with great zeal. She loved holy places in Arabia and the Arabs and looked on anything spent on them as part of her sacred duty. According to her own account, out of her annual income of Seven lakhs nearly two lakhs were spent for charitable or religious

purposes. She bequeatned her property to her grand-daugner, Shah Jehan Begum.

## JEHANGIR MOHAMMAD KHAN (1837-1844)

On the 30th November 1837, Nawab Jehangir Mohammad Khan was duly invested with powers of chief of the State. His relations with Sikander Begum remained good for some time and then became strained especially because she did not observe Purdah according to his wishes. This was also obnoxious to Pathan usage. So in rage he inflicted on her a sword which required four stitches to sew up. To avoid further troubles the Begum moved to Islamnagar Fort and began to live there. (see appendix no. 2) Here a daughter was born to Sikander Begum who was christened as Shah Jehan Begum. They remained at Islamnagar until 1844. Begum's followers were forbidden to visit Bhopal and even to visit Edigaah. The birth of the baby and the good offices of the new political Agent, Mr. Henry Trevelyan, the relations were softened to a great extent. Sikander Begum and Jehangir Mohammad Khan used to meet sometimes in there walks abroad. The Nawab, however, was never reconciled to Qudsia Begum.

The Nawab was fond of excursion and the chase. He took keen interest in the affairs of the State. He built a new colony known as Jehangirabad and provided financial aid to persons who chose their abode in the new colony. He was also a great patron of men of learning and gathered around himself a galaxy of talented men and appreciated the excellence of each at his true worth.

During the year 1844, he became victim to some digestive troubles and his health began to deteriorate rapidly. Both the Begums went to pay him a farewell visit and on 9th December, 1844 at 27 years of age he breathed his last.

The Nawab was of average height, slender built, fair complexion and handsome look and had some reputation as a poet. "During his rule great cheapness of grain prevailed. In the villages the best kind of wheat has been sold as cheap as 80 seers for the rupees and in the city for 50 seers and other things wares cheap in proportion. From this reign the visits and intercourse of men of learning and distinction increased, and from this time dates the

attachment to education and learnings, which has distinguished the chiefs of Bhopal, who hither to courted only the arts of war. The learned Maulvi Sharief Husain of Delhi was appointed State Qazie, and the services of many learned men, poets and Munshis were secured."[23]

## APPENDIX NO. 1

Translation of the Agreement of the Nawab Jehangir Mohammad Khan, Nawab of Bhopal, submitted or the ratification of the Right Honourable the Governer General of India in Council.

Whereas the Right Honourable the Governor General of India in Council, upon learning the existence of the dissentions which had arisen between me and the Begum Qudsia, my respected mother, addressed order to the effect that on the Begum's consigning the entire management of the affairs of the State into my hand. His Lordship would grant the guarantee of the British Government for the security of the Begum's life; and whereas the Begum signified her acquiescence in these orders in a khureet addressed to Mr. Lance-lot walkinson, Political Agent at Bhopal; an as the Agent desired that a suitable provision be made by way of Jahire for the Begum and whereas the Begum has consigned into my hand the sole management of the affairs of the State: I, therefore have, with a view of promoting the comfort of the Begum according to the advice of the above mentioned gentleman, agree to grant the Jaghires. etc, as beneath fixed; and I engage that the Begum's original Jaghire including the Sayer duties attached thereto, and the fort and lands of Islamnuggur yielding about Rupees 17,000 or Rs 18,000 per annum, remain as heretofore in Her Highness's possession. The land of the Barree Pergunnah which are now Khalsa together with the casaba of Baree, are allotted to Her Highness in addition to her old Jagir. The garden and tomb (of the late Nawab): with the land originally attached to them yielding about Rupees 33,000 per annum, will remain in her management and possession as also the palace in which Her Highness now dwells, the Baolee Bagh, the Begum's paora, and the Nuzur Gung shops and her mosque & c the Begum is to refrain from interfering in any way with my management of the affairs of the State, and from seeking to do injury to my life in any

way; and I will refrain from molesting in any way the Begum in the enjoyment of the above mentioned Jagir, &c. during the period of her life, and will not seek to do any injury to her life in any way. The Government of India will hold either of the contracting parties transgressing these agreements in any respect responsible. It is hoped that his Lordship will be pleased to attach his signature to this agreement in ratification thereof, that it may prove on any future occasion if necessary a full assurance.

I shall ever seek with heart and soul to preserve the filial respect due to the Begum as my mother.

Dated 29th November 1837

(Signed by the Nawab Jehangir Mohammad Khan)

These engagements were ratified by the Governor General on 15th January 1838.

(A Collection of Treaties, Engagement and Sanads by C. U. Aitchison, Voloume IV, Superientendent Government Printing Press, Calcutta, 1909, pp. 300-301.

## APPENDEX NO. 2

The following extracts from Wilkinson's Political Agent in Bhopal Diary concerning this incident may be of interest to readers:—

A few weeks after the bestowal of the Khillut, Secunder Begum was wounded at mid-night. She blamed, that the Nawab had treacherously sought to destroy her when he thought that she was asleep. He swears that she, thinking him to be asleep, drew his sword and was about to strike him, when he closed upon her, snatched it from her hands, and that she was wounded in the scuffle. This took place in the Begum's Palace, where he had gone that night on her invitation.

The Agent proceeds to Bhopal and enquires into the case. The Agent, now satisfied of the utter impossibility of restoring any cordial understanding between them, and of the risks attending their living together, at once determined to separate them and was about to recommend the Begums to retire to Islamnagar, when they prefer the request of themselves.

1839, The Nawab was accused before a magistrate of the Madras Presidency of being a party in a conspiracy alleged to have been directed to the overthrow of the British Government. The Agent entirely discredits the existence of the alleged conspiracy, and much more, that the Nawab had become a party to it immediately after his being placed by us in power.

1840. The Agent submits a proposal for the reformation of the Bhopal Contingent, which is approved by the Governor-General. The Nawab agrees to increase the tribute paid for its maintenance from Rs. 1,30,000 to Rs. 1,38,000 towards the completion of the projected reforms. The Cavalry are reduced from 300 to 256 Sabres and the Infantry from 653 to 528 Fighting Men. The later are hence forth to have Muskets instead of Match locks, and an increase rate of pay. There are two Guns attached to the Corps. The Corps is commanded by an European commandant, assisted by an Adjutant.

The revenue of Bhopal now amounts to nearly 18 lakhs, viz, 10 lak under the direct management of the Minister and Nawab, 3 lakhs in Jagir to the Begum 1 lakh in Jagir to the titular Nawab Mooiz Mohammad Khan about 4 lakhs in Jagir to the Nawab's relatives and friends, officers of state, Gond and other Zamindrs.

The amount of the debts and responsibilities of the Nawab's Govt, including areas to his army, does not fall short of 10 lakhs. Arrangement have been made for their gradual liquidation,but the Minister is ever complaining of the Nawab's defeating his schemes for that purpose by is extravagance.

(Narratives of the political Relations of the Govt. of India with Native States Calcutta. Printed by Foreign Dept. Press in 1862 A. D. Chapter Brief Historical Survey of Events at Bhopal from 1829 to 1840 by L. Wilknson Esqr. Political Agent, Bhopal pp 423-427.)

## SIKANDER BEGUM (1844-1868)

**(Second Period)**

The will of Nawab Jahangir Mohammad Khan directed "Dastigir", his illegitimate son to be the chief of the state and Shah Jehan Begum to be married to a descendent of Wazier Mohammad Khan of pure blood.

The will was not given effect to and Shah Jehan Begum was recognised as the Chief of the State under the regency of Sikander Begum with Mian Faujdar Mohammad Khan (son of Ghaus Mohammad Khan) as Minister. Faujdar appointed his own men to the highest office in the state and carried on the Government after his own fashion. This arrangement of dual ruler agency of Sikander Begum and authority of the ministry-brought about an impasse. The high officers of the State sent a petition to the Political Agent complaining about the irregularities of the Minister.

Amir Mohammad Khan, paternal grand—father of Shah Jehan Begum took several hundred Rohillas into his service and revolted and seized Kaliakheri fort. This was curbed in a short while. Amar Mohhad Khan and his two sons were, by the orders of the Governor General, imprisoned for life in the Aseergarh fort where the former died. As a sequel to this civil war, the dual rule was put an end to by the Governor-General and Nawab Sikandar Begum was vested with full powers and authority of administering the State and Faujdar Mohammad Khan had to resign from his office.

On assuming powers, Sikander Begum made Raja Khushwant Rai her minister, "She reformed the army, the public offices attended to the improvement an embellishment of the city, and set herself resolutely to reducing the public debt...she divided the whole country into three divisions, each under a divisional officer (Nazim) and his Deputy. She made inspections of these divisions with her own eyes; she instituted a chain survey, made regulations for realising the land revenue from the landowners. She ascertained the boundary of each village and caused pillars to be erected thereon, made registers of incomplete accounts and of previous pear's assessment and compiled codes of civil, criminal and revenue law".

After the death of Rai, Munshi Jamaludin Khan was elevated to the high post of First Minister who proved himself to be a tried and prudent administrator.[24]

On July 26, 1854, the marriage of Shah Jehan Begum was celebrated with Bakshi Baqi Mohammad Khan, "Nasra Jung". commander-in-chief of the State army. He was recognised at Nawab consort and was conferred upon the title of Nawab Naziruddaula Umrao Dulah Bahadur and a personal salute of 17 guns. The Nawab

also received a Jagir for life of 95 villages with an annual income of Rs. 65,000. Nawab Sikander Begum continued as regent until Nawab Shah Jehan Begum attained the age of 21 years. She asked the Nawab to give the following undertaking:-

(1) "In state affairs I shall only act in consultation with state Officers".

(2) Pay due respect and regard to Nawab Sikander Begum and execute all her orders unquestioningly.

(3) Not associate with low class people nor will raise them to high position so as to impair the dignity of the State and the tone of its administration".[25]

She treated Umrao Dulah as her son in private dealing and with honour in public.

According to Major Charters Macpher son, the Political Agent "The Regent is a wonderful woman in the way of Government talks exactly in her way like the fastest European woman mixing politics with her personalities. She shows a fine Elizabethan taste in the choice of her affairs of the State."

Sikander Begum remodelled and modernised the State army on the lines of the British army. The artillery, too, was reorganised. All this proved a but work of strength during the troublous time of Indian Mutiny 1857 and almost undisturbed tranquillity pervaded throughout the length and breadth of Bhopal territory.

'Fazil Mohammad Khan and Adil Mohammad Khan, Jagirdars of Ambapani, mutinied, and their estates were confiscated, Fazil Mohammad Khan shut himself up in the fort of Rahatgarh, refused admission to the English troops whom he resisted by force. He was captured alive and executed, while Adil Mohammad Khan so disappeared that be had never been heard of since then. The men of the contingent (Bhopal) at Schore mutinied; Sikandar Begum appointed an adequate force for their chastisement and with great skill managed to wrest the cantonment of Schore from the mutineers, who were captured by the European force and executed"[26]

A. P. Nicholson testified these facts in these words: "While on our side in Bhopal, to the South, another heroic lady, Sikandar

Begum kept her troops staunch, coerced her mutinous contingent, gave sanctuary to British officers and, when the tide turned, was liberal with soldiers and supplies."[27]

(See also the note no 3 attached)

When the mutiny was over, European officers were well-pleased with the Begum, she was acknowledged as Regent for life according to her wishes. Shahjehan Begum waived all claims to Masnad during the life time of her other and remained content with a status akin to that of a Heir-Apparent.

On 7th Jaunary, 1861 Sikandar Begum visited the Viceroy at Jabalpore. Here in the open Durbar the Begum was presented with a sanad conferring on her the Berasia Paragana confiscated from the Dhar State. In November of the same year she was invested with the title of G. C. S. I. at Allahabad.

She toured various places of India and met the Viceroy three times. She also went on pilgrimage to Mecca. She died on 30th October, 1868 at the age of 51 and was buried in Farhat Afza garden.

"Sikander Begum was an ardent and prudent reformer; she changed entirely the fiscal system, established a mint, abolished monopolies, reorganised the police and paid off the public debt within six years."[28]

Although a woman, she possessed all the soldierly qualities that had distinguished her predecessors. Her personality inspired both love and respect. In a word, the enlightened ability of her administration surpasses that of any other ruler whose lot it has been to govern unaided in times as critical."[29]

She was a peerless woman and a peerless ruler possessed of high qualities of matchless aptitudes.

The Sikander Begum conducted the administration with great vigour and ability. She abolished the system of farming the revenue and made settlements directly with the heads of villages; regulated the assessments of the estates of the Jagirdars; abolished monopolies of trades; brought the mint under her direct management; reorganised the police; and made arrangements for the liquidation of the debts of the State."**

## NOTE NO. 3

Descriptive list of Muniny Papers in the National Archives of India Bhopal.

Volume I, National Archives of India, New Delhi (1960) Abridged.

Ever since Nawab Qudsia Begum was forced to give up the administration of the State in favour of Jahangir Mohammd Khan, husband of Sikander Begum her attitude had become most non-co-operative and sulky. During the Mutny, Nawab Sikander Begum had to make repeated requests to her mother not to allow the insurgents to take refuge within her Jagir. Even the Ruler's requests for financial ansistance remained either unattended to or received evasive replies from the dowager Begum.

Nawab Sikander Begum's first care as to meet the unusual drain on the State treasury due to the heavy expenses incurred during the Mutiny. To face this financial crisis, she exhausted all possible resources. She not only approached her mother, Nawab Qudsia Begum, for financial help but also requested the various Sardars or nobles of the State to render every assistance in this important matter. She even approached the rich bankers and merchants of Bhopal for obtaining loan at a fixed rate of interest. It was due to these timely measures that the Begum was able to keep her troops regularly paid. Throughout the period of Mutiny, it would be difficult to find any instance where the pay of the troops had fallen in arrears. References are available among the Mutiny papers which show that Nawab Sikandar Begum sent money to Sehorė for disbursing the salary of the rebellious intentions, was threatened with dismissal for refusing to accept his pay and subsequently discharged from service.

Nawab Sikandar Begum also adopted certain measures of economy in order to tide over the economic crisis created by the Mutiny. She issued on order reducing the pay of torch bearers appointed at the forts of Raisen, Sewans and Chukigarh, She also issued orders to the commanders and district officers to discharge all sepoys who were recruited over and above the night sanctioned for the various place in the State. (p. ii).

During the Mutiny, Nawab Sikander Begum resorted to a novel method of recruiting soldiers for the Bhopal army. She order the district officers to recruit twentyfive men from every Pargana. But at the same time she insisted upon the efficiency of the troops to be recruited. The district officers, therefore, found it difficult in many cases to recruit the requisite number of officient soldiers from each Pargana. The Begum's anxiety to keep up the efficiency of the army is also evident from her orders that while discharging soliders, only those should be retrenched who were found inefficient or lethargic, where as the efficient ones should be retained irrespective of the fact whether they were temporary or permanent.

Nawab Sikander Begum paid minute attention to the comfort of the troops. While enforcing strict discipline in the army, she saw that proper arrangements are were made for providing the soldiers with food medicine and shelter. She deputed Hakim John D' Silva to attend on the sick soldiers there and even saw to it that the sentiments of the troops were not injured in any way. When a report was made to her about the presence of particles of bone in the sugar sold at Sehore, she at once ordered an enquiry to be made into the matter and tried her best to pacify the troops. The army also received its due share of praise and approbation from the ruler and it was not infrequent that the army officers found Parwanas addressed to them by her, offering them encouragement and praising them for their loyalty and bravery. She also kept on advising the sepoys not to be influenced by the mutineers and not be swayed by their assertions that the Britishers were trying to interfere with the religion of Indians. In this way by her skill and tact as well as by her good behaviour Nawab Sikandar Begum managed to keep the army under control during the Mutiny, and it is no wonder that the army reciprocated her kind sentiments by their loyalty and obedience. The most vulnerable part of the Bhopal State was its southern portion which was contiguous to the British district of Hoshangabad, with the river Nerbada flowing between the British and the State territories. There was a regular ferry service and besides the river was fordable at many points. It, therefore, provided an easy passage to the mutineers to cross in the State, Nawab Sikandar Begun took adequate steps to guard this area against the unauthorised entry of the insurgents. She issued orders that all armed persons who entered

the State without authority, would be apprehend and handed over to the Police. She also instructed the collectors and other officers of the State to keep her posted with the latest information regularly.

In order to prevent panic and to suppress the activities of the insugents, Nawab Sikandar Begum strictly prohibited the circulation of all seditious notices and pamphlets and ordered that every such notice found lying on the road or stuck on the walls, should be sent to her immediately. She instituted a strict enquiry against one Abdual Quyyum who was alleged to have received and distributed 500 copies of a pamphlet issued by the insurgents, inciting the Hindus and Muslims in India to rise in revolt against the British Govt. as it was trying to interfere with their religious affairs. She also had the copy of the statement issued by the Governor General of India, refuting the charges levelled by the mutineers against the British Government, as well as a copy of the Calcutta Gazette on the subject, circulated among the officers and men of the Bhopal Army, and asked them to give no credence to the allegations of the insurgents.

As an additional step to cease the public mind, Nawab Begum posted guards to patrol the markets etc. at Sehore and other places. She also asked the bankers and merchants to employ their own guards for the protection of their life and property. However in the case of those who could not afford to do so, she ordered the state guards to be posted for their protection. All district officers were ordered to report to her every case of loot or plunder committed by the insurgents within their respective areas, and troops were immediately despatched for suppressing the rebels. She also maintain strict supervision over the supply of arms and ammunitions to the troops. Regular account was maintained of the articles of magazine issued from the Fort of Fatehgarh at Bhopal.

She also evolved a system of espionage during the mutiny. A part from the detailed reports which she received regularly from the various officers on every minute affair, she issued orders for the appointment of one Khwaja Mohammad Akram for the purpose of submitting to her regular reports about the opinion of the pubic in general in Bhopal.

It appears that Sehore played quite an important part in the history of Bhopal during the Mutiny It was at this place that Colonel Durand, Agent to the Governor General in central Indian was give temporary asylum after retreating from Indore, and was then escorted along with Mr. Richards, the Political Agent to Hoshangabad by the Bhopal Contingent. Nawab Sikandar Begum also gave shelter to many fugitives, including British women and children,who came to Bhopal.

But the one person who figures most prominently among the Mutiny Papers listed in this volume, is Munshi Bhawani Vakil of the Bhopal State during the Mutiny. He was stationed at Sehore at that time in order to maintain direct contact with the British Political Agent. Apart from Nawab Sikandar Begum, The Vakil appears to have enjoyed vast supervisory powers in civil as well as military matters. It was he who was directly or indirectly entrusted with the task of maintaining peace and tranquillity at Sehore, of keeping an eye on the Bhopal Army stationed at Sehore, and of protecing the State troops from the demoralishing influence of the activities of the insurgents. He also enjoyed unlimited confidence of the Ruler and was favoured with her orders and communications even on most secret and confidential matters of the State.

## REFERENCES

1. Raghubir Singh—Malwa in Transition or A Century of Anarchy (1936) p. 227.
2. Ibid. p. 251.
3. Ibid. p. 266.
4. Ibid p. 292.

* Note: 1738—Baji Rao writes: "I the Nizam is trenched in the city of Bhopal. I fought the Nizam on 3rd Ramzan (24th December) and then in invested his army. Famine raged in his camp; grass could not be had. So he sent...to me to negotiate for terms (long negotiations) the Nizam then came out and encamped beyond the lake. Next morning he retreated to Bhopal fighting with his artillery. But we have blockaded him as closely as we did Mohammad Khan of Bangash. Leaving his luggage partly in Bhopal and partly in Islamnagarh, and continuing the peace talk he is marching away, at the rate of a kos or 11/2kos a day. Our forces hovering, around him, have

entirely cut off his grass and fuel supply. Rice is selling at one rupees a seer in his camp, and even at that price many cannot obtain it.

(Later Moghals by Wiliam Irivne, Edited By Jadunath Sarkar, Volume II (1719-1739). A Mukrjee and Company Limited Calcutta-12-footnote p. p.305-306).

5. History of India by Sir H. M. Elliot and Prof. John Dowson Vol, III op. 58-60.
6. Sir William Baton, "The Prince of India" (1934) p. 216.
7. Raghubir Singh-Malwa in Transition or a Century of Anarchy (1936) p. 304.
8. Major William Hough—A Brief History of Bhopal Prinicipality (1845) p. 9.

* Note: Bhilsa Under Akbar. It became the headquarter of one of Moghals of Sarkar of Raisen in Subha Malwa: In the 18th century it was granted by Swaijai Singh of Jaipur (the Governor of Malwa) to the Nawab of Bhopal, but passed soon after into the possession of Peshwa. It became into Sindhia's hands in 1775 and has since formed the part for Gwalior. (Gwalior Gazetteer pp. 306. and 307).

9. Sir John Malcom—"Report on the Province of Malwa and Adjoining Districts" p, 161.

** According to Mr. Attchison, "Faiz Mohammad Khan, was of weak intellect, nominally ruled Bhopal for thirty eight years".

(A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads by C, U, Aitchison, Vol. IV, Suprientendent Government Printing, Calcutta, 1909) p, 282.

10. Sir John Malcolm in "Report of the Province of Malwa and Adjoining Districts (pp 392-93) writes:— "pindaries or master robbers of Malwa-some individual chiefs, Pensioners of English Government, and a few poor inhabitants of some villages in Bhopal and Nimar are all who now owe to the name of his late formidable tribe...they were supersitious. The women of almost all the Mohammadan Pindaris wore Hindu cloths, and worshipped Hindu deities; from accompanying their husbands in most of heir excursions they became hardy and masculine; they were usually mounted on small horses or camels, and were more dreaded by the villagers than, the man being in general more rapacious and merciless robbers".
11. Major William Hough— "Brief History of Bhopal Principally" pp. 34-35.
12. Amir Khan was a native of Sumbhal Moradabad—served Nawab Hayat Mohammad Khan and after a chequered career advocated the cause of

Jaswant Rao Holkar, as an associate of whose fortune he rose to a fame that made him for many years eminent among the disturbers of peace of India. He sided with the Nawab of Bhopal.

13. Major William Hough— "A Brief History of Bhopal Principality" pp. 59-69 & 89 condensed.
14. Major Ross, Rulers of India-Marquins of Hastings" pp. 50, 86, 87, 92 condensed.
15. Edward Thompson, The Marketing of Indian Princes", p. 209.

* It has been contended at some quarters that "That Wazir Mohammad Khan never ascended the throne of Bhopal there is ample evidence to show. He is mentioned by Majar Willam Hough (Brief History of the Bhopal Principality, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta 1864), as filling the office of Dwan in 1802. The same writer, in describing Wazier Mohammad's memorable defence of Bhopal, in 1813, refers to Ghaus Mohammad Khan as "the nawab". And Lord Minto's letter to Wazier Mohammad Khan to which Her Highness has referred, is dated 1810 Wazir Mohammad Khan's full style was Wazir-ud-Daulah nawab Wazir Mohammad Khan which he retained to the last, and it is inconceivable that a ruler would allow himself to be called Wazir-ud-Daulah (literally, Minister of the realm). He certainly wielded the highest exceutive authority in the State so did Bije Ram and Himmat Rai (both Hindoos) before him, but that need not be taken to imply that he, any more than his predecessors in office, was the actual Ruler. Instance would not be wanting even today of Indian chiefs having delegated all their powers to their ministers."

(Confidential, Bhopal State Notes and Decuments for reference to the Indian States Committee, Vol, VII, pp. 9-10, Bombay, The Times Press 1928).

16. Edward Thompson, "The Making of Indian Princes". p. 218.
17. Major Ross- "Rulers of Indian Marquins of Hastings" p 167-168.
18. James Grant Duff— A History of Marhattas Vol. II p. 470.
19. Major William Hough—"A Brief History of the Bhopal Principality" pp 118-119-120 (abridged)
20. "Hayat-i-Quesi" by H. H. Sultan Jehan Begum, p. 16-17.
21. Nawab Sutan Jehan Begum, "Hayat-i-Qudsi", p. 48.
22. Narratives of the Political Relations of the Government of India with Native State, Calcutta. Printed by Foreign Department Press in 1862 A. D. Chapter-Brief Historical Survey of Events at Bhopal from 1829 to 1840 By Wilkinson Esqr. Political Agent Bhopal pp. 13-427 abridged.

23. Newab Shah Jahan Begum—"Tegul-Iqbal Tarik Bhopal" p. 53-54.
24. Newab Shahjehan Begum, "Tajul Iqbal History of Bhopal", p. 58.
23. Nawab Sltanjean Begum, "Tazkirai Baqui", p, 26.
25. Nawab Shahjehan Begum, Tajul Iqbal, History of Bhopal" p. 65.
26. A. P. Niocholson "Scraps of Papers" (1930) India's Broken Treaties, p. 199.
27. Sir Evelyn Wood "The Revolt of Hindustan" pp. 190-191.
28. Nawab Sultanjehan Begum "An Account of my life." Vol. I. p.18.

* (A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads by C. U. Aitchison, Vol. IV Superintendent, Government Printing Press Calcutta, 1909. p. 286).

** Translation of a Sunad granting Pergunnah Bairasia to the State of Bhopal, 1860.

Whereas during the rebellion, Newab Secunder Begum, ruler of Bhopal, rendered from loyalty good service to the British Government and maintained order and peace in the territory of Bhopal: This Government, being highly satisfied therewith, has been pleased to grant in sovereignty Pergunnah Bairasia to the Bhopal State from generation to generation. All the conditions which at present exist in respect to Bhopal shall apply to the pergunnah now conferred upon that State.

27th December 1860 Sd. Canning.

(A Collection of Treaties, Engagements Sanads by C.U. Aaitchison, Vol-IV Superintendent Government Printing Press, Calcutta (1909) p. 301.

29. Nawab Sultanjehan Begum "An Account of My Life." Vol. I, p. 18.

# 6

# Shahjehan Begum (1868-1901)

On the death of Sikander, Begum Shahjehan Begum became ruler of Bhopal with full-fledged powers and her daughter Sultan Jehan as recognised as Heir-Apparent. While returning, from pilgrimage Nawab Bequi Mohammad Khan fell ill and died.[1] This was a great blow to Nawab Shahjehan Begum who was attached to her husband with as great a punctilious regard for him as the dictates of the Holy Shariat damanded.

**(REFORMS)**

Shahjehan Begum on becoming the ruler looked into the affairs of the treasury and her mother's "Toshakhana". Jewels to the value of Rs. 72,955/5/8 whose price had not been paid owing to her failing health were returned. The debt on her private estate amounting to Rs. 1,25,688/9/3 and State debt of Rs. 5,52,752/11/9 were paid off by installments.

There was dearness of corn because a remission of half the tax was allowed on all corn purchased for the use of British Cantonment, while no remission was granted on corn brought to Bhopal for consumption of the public with the result that a very low quantity was supplied to the city whose rate had gone to an abnormal index. The situation realised by her, the tax on grain was abolished on 14h April, 1869 and the situation was eased.

The Begum toured the whole territory of his State and the grievances of the public were properly redressed and the officials who were guilty of corrupt practices were brought to book.

She çhanged the coinage "The former copper coins were called in, and new ones were issued; but the weight and value of the coins were not changed from the late Begum's standard. These coins bore the words quarter annas and the letter "sh" with distinguishing marks an the year of the Hejira stamped on them and were first issued on the Ist Shawwal 1286 A.H. The silver of the Bhopal rupees used to be hard, and the weight some thing less than that of the English rupees, therefore its value in the market was slightly less than the Jaipur, Indore, Kotah, and Tonk rupees. On this account it was determined to issue a coin of pure silver of the same value as the English rupee, and the inscriptions of the former rupees, on own side of which the words "coined at Bhopal" and on the reverse, the year of the Hejira used to be stamped, were altered." Thus the State coined its own silver and copper money until 1899 when the mints were closed and the British (Kaldar) rupee took place of the local coin.

The Begum also divided the soil into six major classes three of irrigated and three of unirrigated land each class being sub-divided into level, hilly, uneven and sterile. A plane table survey of the State was carried out or revenue purpose which took the place of old Jarib survey done during Nawab Sikandar Begüm's time and in 1872 the State was surveyed trignometrically by the survey of India Department.

There were three Presses in the State:—

(1) **Sikander Press,** where proclamations, forms etc used to be printed.

(2) **Sultania Press,** in which stamps were impressed.

(3) **Shahjehani Press,** were school books and a newspaper sheet could be struck off.

She had keen interest in the public works, beautiful buildings like Taj Mahal, Aali Manzil, Be-Nazir, Zenatul Masagid, Tajul Masagid bear testimony to her archaeological taste. She also installed one Cotton Mill in Bhopal.

During her regime great famines of 1890 and 1900 took place. Her Highness displayed great magnanimity and broadmindedness in taking up relief and remedial measures. She also made liberal contributions to philanthropic and educational institutions.

"In July 1855 Shahjehan Begum was married to Bakshi Baki Mohammad Khan of Bhopal family. Indeed, there existed no member of the family with whom the Shahjehan Begum could contract an eligible marriage; and as the nobles of Bhopal, although willing to submit to the Begum, were not prepared to acknowledge as ruler of Bhopal any one who did not belongt to the ruling family, some modification of the arrangements made in 1844 became necessary. It was eventually decided that Shahjehan Begum should be the Chief of the State, her husband being only titular Nawab, and that Sikandar Begum should continue to act as regent till Shahjehan Begum should reach the age of twenty-one".

She established a "Mina Bazar" in Bhopal. For this market a building known as "Parvin Manzil" costing rupees three lakhs was constructed which was provided with wooden shops and warehouses. The women shop-keepers would trade the goods. Every year turn-over worth lakhs of rupees could be done in this market. Once when it incidentally caught fire the shop-keepers were compensated for their losses out of the public exechequer. Her Highness earned the approbation of the Governor General for good administrative ability.

## (SECOND MARRIAGE)

With the consent of the English Government and concurrence of the member of the family, the Begum married Syed siddiq Hasan Khan. the latter has been for seventeen years in the service of the State and held important offices and titles of "Mir Dabir" and "Khan" were conferred on him. Many works on religious subjects of which he was the author or compiler gained a wide reputation.

After marriage, the title of "Nawab wala Jah Ameerul Mulk" was conferred on him. A Khilat and a salute of 14 guns (within Bhopal) was granted to him by the Governor-General.* (Please see the foot-note)

Some of the relatives of Her Highness disapproved of this marriage. Too much of rancour and bad feelings evinced from their sides. This worsened the relations of Her Highness with her daughter, Sultan Jehan Begum. The letter writes in her book.

Siddiq Hasan Khan had surrounded himself with a band of adherents who, besides being utterly unscrupulous, had no personal interest in the welfare of the State and to these men he gave, one by one, every high office that fell vacant with the result that corruption and mismanagement spread into all branches of the administration."

**Degradation of Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan "Griffin Gardperiod"**

Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan belonged to Wahabi sect well know for anti-British feelings. His three religious treatises entitied "Majmua Khutub, Hadayat-us-sait especially constituted in reality an attack upon the British Government. He was taken to tast by Sir Lepal Griffin, Agent to the Govemor-General in Central India. The Nawab was deprived of his titles and salute and directed to abstain from all interference in the affairs of the state. (See Note no 5 and 6).

There after, Abdul Lateef Khan was appointed first Minister of State. Her Highness is said to have remarked, "It is Sulan Jehan Begum and Sultan Dulah who have brought this misfortune upon me." She tried up to the hilt for the restoration of the title. But the reply. received was that "no alteration in the orders of the Government was possible."

Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan quoted the following facts in its defence:—

(1) English Government in a despatch of 15th October 1872 remarked:—

It is your Highness and the Nawab to maintain the prosperity and progress of the State which is already a pattern of good management to other States"

Further on 3rd March 1877: "Remember me kindly to the Nawab who is earnest to make Bhopal and the Shahjehan Begum famous. I am sure he will not fail in energy."

Lord Ripon in his Kharit dated 9th November 1882, conveyed his thanks to me for my good wishes and congratulations. The Government after the defeat of Arby Pasha........

(2) In 1881, Sir Lepel Griffin came to Bhopal and I went to give him a cordial reception. I could not make out the

reason of his cold and indifferent conduct towards me, but the warm reception he accorded to Ahamad Ali Khan, the husband of Sultan Jehan Begum, struck me that he was quite unlike his predecessors."

(3) I am neither disloyal nor a Wahabi. The sentences quoted, are the translations from the work of others and whenever the expression of my own views is made, I have strongly insisted on my co-religionists to be friendly to the British Government.

(4) Sworn enmity of the opposition Clique in Bhopal has Brought ruin on you and me. Sultan Jehan forgot all the affections shown by me to her and her children. She fargot all the intercessions I made on her behalf before your Highness.

* The following account given by Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan himself shows he had come in Bhopal service and had risen to power and had got into the good books of Her Highness Nawab Shah Jehan Begum:

"It was at Mirzapur that I received a Parwana from Nawab Sikandar Begum, inviting me to Bhopal. I took my journey to Bhopal via Jabalpur, When I reached Bhopal towards the end of the month of Safar, I received another order to eave Bhopal at once. After a week's stay I took my departure the guest of the syed Hamiduddin, now deceased. The Waziruddaula Behadur insisted upon my accepting a vacancy with a small remuneration. After eight month's stay in Tonk I was favoured with another utter from Nawab Sikander Begum apologising for what had happened in the previous occasion of my visit. I reached Bhopal on the 13th Muharram 1275 A. H. and was very kindly received by the Begum who paid all the expenses of my journey to Bhopal and asked me to forget the past. I was entrusted with the duty of writing a history of Bhopal and making by-laws for conducting the general business of the State. Shortly after, the management of Sulaimania Madrasa was entrusted to me. I thought this arrangement very fortunate for me, as it afforded me every opportunity of pursuing my literary course and employing my time in my favourite studies. This state of affairs lasted one year when Abdul Ali, Mir Munsh (Chief Secretary) of the

State was dismissed, and I was put in his place against my will. I received the title of of Khan and Mir Dabir.

I was not pleased with this post, but I had to acquiesce in the arrangement. One cannot avoid his fate. Decrees of Providence are ever executed by force.

Next year the present ruler of Bhopal honoured me by giving me her hand in marriage. The Government of India was first informed of the proposed match and its permission obtained. This connection proved to me a source of honour. I received the title of Motamadul Moham and with it a Jagir yielding Rs. 24,000 per annum, a grand Khilat (a robe of honour) valued at Rs. 10,000, with horses, elephants, planquins and swords. Shortly afterwards the British Government conferred upon me the title. "Nawab Amirul Mulk Walajah" and fixed for me a salute of 17 guns.

Over and above all this I got an assignment of yielding one lakh a year. In short I lost my former independent and became a bondman."

> (An Interpreter of Wahabism by the Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan Behadur, edited by Syyed Akber Alam, third Assistant to the Second Minister of Bhopal. Calcutta Published by the author—1884 pp. 47-48)

The following account of Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan is given in the preface of the book "Interpreter of Wahabism" by Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan:

(pp. IV and V)

"Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan is a man of vast literary acquirement. I doubt if there is any alim in India at the present day who can even approach the author in the profundity and depth of knowledge of Arabic literature. He is also a great Arabic, Persian and Urdu poet. He has composed sixty-three works, in prose and verse, of various sizes, on different subjects. within a remarkably short time; and I can hardly recollect any alim who has done the same.

"Never have I observed anything tending to Wahabism in his speech, his writing or his mode of prayer....He is perfectly liberal in his views of religion, and a toleration of it is an abiding principle in the reign of Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal. However,

malacious and interested persons grudging his good luck and the dignity to which he has attained, have not left the Nawab Wala Jah undisturbed in the enjoyment of home and social comforts. They caused to be published, the report that the Nawab hold Wahabi doctrine a charge not only ridiculous but altogether groundless. They did not stop even here. They sent anonymous letter to the British authorities with a view to prejudice their mind against the Nawab and cast a slur upon his well earned ruputation".

Wahabism—In his book An Interpreter of Wahabism—Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan gives the following note on Wahabism—its birth and later history.

"The Wahabi band derived its origin from a Tamimi man, or in other words, Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab himself. He was among the descendent of Ali and belonged to the Masalikh clan—Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab lived at Deraiya in Nedjed. Saud bin Abdul Aziz was the Governor of Nedjed in those days. Saud combined with Ibn Abdul Wahab and in the year 1760 A.D. began to propagate his teaching. He was succeeded by his son Abdul Aziz who repulsed two large armies sent against him by the Vister of Baghdad.. In the year 1794 A. D., he overthrew another army led under the standard of Zaid, son of Masaid, Sharif of Mecca. This Wahabi band conquered Iraq and after attacking the mosque of Ali, reduced it to ruins. In the year 1804 A. D. Abdul Aziz sent his son Saud with a force of 12,000 men to Taif and Mecca, over which the commanders succeeded in making himself a master. He now marched with his army to Jeddah where, during the siege, he heard that his father Abdul Aziz was dead. He consequently came back to Deraiya. In the same year he went to Hejaz and took possession of Medina and conquered all the countries in its vicinity. He ruled over them till the year 1815 A D when Ibrahim Pasha; the Governor of Egypt, prepared to dive him out. He overthrew Saud in many battles ans at last drove him from Hejaz Saud died of fever at Daiarya when he was fifty years of age. His descendents ruled and still rule over Nedjed. Their chief town is Riaoh. They are all Wahabis"

The learned author has, in his above book also pointed out that Wahabism in its real form has no roots in India. The words "wahabi" is used in India with different connotations. For instance, in

Eyderabed a Wahabi means one refrains from drinking toddy and keeps his payjama (trouser) above ankle ID Bhambay, it is one who looks upon Maji Mauludas a heretical innovation.

A Wahabi in Bengal is one who does not follow and abide by the rules of any of the four churches of Islam, but walks by the true and safe path indicated by the Prophet and keeps himself aloof from those religious innovations, the product of the reasoning of certain minds, prohet up after the death of the prohet.

"It has been impressed upon the minds of the English rulers that the Wahabis as a class are their enemies, that they intend to kill them, and destroy the existing Government, and that they seriously intend disturbing the peace and well-being of the people of India. On the other hand, supposing the Wahabis to be really such as they have been represented, still no sensible and wise man will be able to prove the truth of the accusation that they entertain serious thoughts against the existing order of things. India will in that case be a darulharb (the mansion of war a darul Islam (a country where Islam prevails)"

**Death of Siddiq Hasan Khan in 1890.**

Despite the above, Siddiq Hasan Khan was a great patriot. In 1890, he died of dropsy. Her Highness plunged into agony and distress. She took up the case of her husband again with the British Government and this time the reply was favourble:-

"It gives me great pleasure to state that the Government of India has acceded to your Highness's request that your late husband may be referred to in official documents and correspondence as "the late Nawab and husband of the Ruler." This was notified accordingly.

In 1872, Her Highness was made a G. C. S.I. She attended the Imperial Assamblage held at Delhi in 1877 and received a banner and a medal. In the year 1879, she obtained sanction for the establishment of an Opium Agency in Bhopal.

Her Highness also agreed to the construction of a State Railway from Itarsi to Bhopal. contributing twenty-five lakhs on behalf of State and ten lakhs on that of Qudsia Begum. The

agreement was signed and sealed accordingly. In the words of Joseph chailly:—

"Hydrabad, Bhopal, Mysore, Baroda, Jaipur, and Bikaner are other State which have financed railway systems that know provide them with a profitable income.",[5] (See also Note no 4).

'During Her Highness' rule, lord Landsdowne, Lord Elgin and Lord Curzon visited Bhopal. The Government of India acknowledge her excellent qualities and administrative abilities.

She developed concern in her left cheek in 1901, which proved fatal. A few days before her death, she caused the following pathetic notice to be published.

"If there are any among my subjects who, during the thirty three years of my reign, have received unmerited punishment at my hands I ask them in the name of God to forgive me."

Her Subject plunged into grief and tears trickled down their faces on 14th June, 1901, she died.

In a later dated the 8th February, 1870, Colonel Ousely Her Highness that His Grace the Duke of Argil, the then Secretary of State for India, had written to the Viceroy to the effect that.

"It is gratifying to learn that Her Highness Shahjehan Begum has already given proof of her desire to conduct the affairs of her State in the liberal and enlightened spirit which distinguished the late Nawab Secunder Begum during a long course of years, with such signal benefit to all classes of her subjects, and you are requested to convey to Her Highness Shahjehan Begum the delight of Her Majesty at the salutary reforms the Begum has effected in her State".

Nawab Shahjehan Begum as both a scholar and author, she had many books to her credit. Her best known works are "Tajul Iqbal" "Diwani Shereen", "Khazinatul laghat", "Tahzibun-Niswan", Loghati-Shahjehan". Her court was frequented by men of learning from all parts of India. She founded many school for oriental studies. Education on modern lines was in a backward State, and the only High School that existed was ill managed, and ill attended.

## NOTE NO. 4

Articles of Agreement between the Government of India and Her Highness the Nawab Shahjehan Begum, Ruler of Bhopal for the construction of a Railway within the State of Bhopal 1880.

### ARTICLE 1

Her Highness the Nawab Shahjehan Begum, Rule of Bhopal, agrees to give the sum of thirty-five lakhs of rupees and Her Highness the Kudsia Begum agrees to give the sum of fifteen lakhs of rupees towards the construction of a Railway between, the Great Peninsula Railway and the city of Bhopal, and if possible the Government of Sehore, the whole amount to be paid in four annual installments commencing from the month of January 1880. Should any portion of the sum payable by Her Highness the Kudsia Begum remain unpaid at Her Highness' death, the State of Bhopal engages to pay the balance.

### ARTICLE 2

The profits on the sum of thirty-five lakhs paid by the State of Bhopal shall be enjoyed by the Ruler of the State of Bhopal in perpetuity, and the profits on the sum of fifteen lakhs of rupees paid by Her Higness the Kudsia Begum shall be enjoyed by her during her lifetime and there after by the ruler of Bhopal in perpetuity.

### ARTICLE 3

Profits according on this Railway and its extension to Agra should that be carried out, shall be divided in proportion to the amount respectively subscribed by the several State contributing to the construction of the through line from the Great Indian Peninsula Railway to Agra.

### ARTICLE 4

The construction and management of line and the entire jurisdiction within Railway limits shall rest with the Government of India, and the State of Bhopal shall have no right of interference therein.

### ARTICLE 5

The State of Bhopal shall give land within its territory for all Railway purposes, including all land required for stone quarries for the excavation of ballast. for permanent and temporary roads in connection with the construction, maintenance and working of the line, for stations etc, free of charge land, rent, and shall afford all reasonable assistance in procuring labour and material for the construction of the Railway. The land taken up for temporary purposes will be restored to the State as soon as the necessity for it ceases.

### ARTICLE 6

The State of Bhopal shall levy no duty upon any articles which may be required for the construction and maintenance of the line or for other Railway purposes, neither shall it levy duties on any articles conveyed by the Railway while they are in transit on the line.

### ARTICLE 6

A first, second, and third class carriage shall be appropriated for the personal use of the Ruler of Bhopal to travel in within the limits of the Bhopal state free of charge.

| | |
|---|---|
| 30th August 1880 | sd. Shahjehan Begum. |
| | (In Persian) |
| (Seal of the Nawab) | sd. W. P. Priceaux, |
| Shahjehan Begum. | Political Agent, Bhopal.. |

This agreement was approved and confirmed by His Excellency the Viceroy and General in Council at Simla on the 6th September, 1880.

By order of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council.

(Sd.) A. C. Lyall

Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department

No CVI

Supplementary Agreement between the Government of India and Her Highness the Nawab Shahjehan Begum, Ruler of Bhopal, relative to the construction of a railway in the Bhopal State, 1887.

Whereas on the 16th day of September 1880 an agreement was made between the Government of India and Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal, which provided, amongst other things, for the construction of a railway between the Great Peninsula Railway and the city of Bhopal; and whereas, owing to the death of the late lamented Kudsia Begum, and to the course of other events, the circumstances contemplated by that agreement have been to some extent changed; and into conformity with the altered conditions of affairs: Now, therefore, the Government of India and Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal do hereby make and enter into a supplementary agreement as follows:-

I. Article II in the agreement of the 16th September 1880 is cancelled.

II. For Articles III and IV of the aforesaid agreement, the following words and figures are substituted, namely:-

**ARTICLE 3**

"The profits accruing on the aforesaid railway shall be divided in perpetuity between the British Government and the Ruler of Bhopal according to the mileage constructed at the cost of wither party, that is to say, in the proportion of 13 and 14.

**ARTICLE 4**

"The construction and management of the aforesaid railway an entire jurisdiction within railway limits shall rest with the Government of India, and the State of Bhopal shall have no right of interference therein."

(Sd.) Shahjehan (Seal)

(Sd.) P. W. Bannerman

Agent to the Governor-General for

Central India.

Approved and confirmed by His Excellency the Viceroy Governor-General in Council.

(SD). H. M. Durand (Secy).

No GVII

Supplementary Agreement between the Government of India and Her Highness the Nawab Sahajehan Begum, Rule of Bhopal, relative to the construction of a railway in the Bhopal State, 1890.

Whereas on the 30th day of June 1887 a Supplementary Agreement was made between the Government of India and Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal, which provided amongst other things,that the profits accruing on the aforesaid Railway should be divided in perpetuity between the British Government and the Ruler of Bhopal according to the mileage constructed at the cost of either party; and whereas it is deemed desirable that division of profit shall be in proportion to the capital found by each party at the close of the period for which the accounts are made up. Now therefore the Government of India and Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal do hereby make and enter into a Supplementary Agreement as follows:—

## ARTICLE 3

The profits accruing on the aforesaid Railway shall be divided in perpetuity between the British Government and the Ruler of Bhopal in proportion to the capital contributed by each party at the close of the period for which the accounts are made up. In the event of the Railway being worked at a loss during any half-year or other period for which the accounts may be made up. Such loss shall be borne by the British Government and the Ruler of Bhopal in the same proportions".

This Agreement shall take effect from the Ist January, 1891.

(Sd.) Shah Jehan Begum)

(Sd.) A Martaindale

(Seal)

The 14th October 1890. Offg. Political Agent, Bhopal

Approved confirmed by His Excellency the Vicerory and Governor General in Council,

(Sd.) W.I. Cuningham

Offg: Secretary to the Government of India

Foreign Dept.

Camp. Agra

The 2nd December 1890

(A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads by C.U. Aitchison, Volume IV, Superintendent Governments Printing Press. Calcutta, 1909 pp. 304.308)

**NOTE 5**

The following is a copy of the order issued by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in the matter of Munshi Siddiq Hasan formerly known as Nawab, and approved by Her Majesty's Secretary of State, for India.

**ORDER**

"His Excelleacy the Viceroy and Governor-General has directed that Nawab Siddiq Hasan be deprived of his titles and salute, and that he shall in future abstain from all interference, direct of his disregading this order, a punishment of a much heavier kind shall be dealt out to him. Seeing that by his usurpation of authority, and by the oppression that has characterised his act, the condition of the State and its administration is in the highest degree unsatisfactory, His Excellency directs the appointment of a duly qualified Madarul Maham, who is to be given full administrative powers."

(Hayati Shahjeani by Her Highness Nawab Sultan Jehan Begum, Bombey, The Times Press (1926) p. 289.

**NOTE 6**

Extracts from Kharita from Her Highness Nawab Sbahjehan Begum, Ruler of Bhopal to Sir, L. Griffin, Agent to the Governor General in Central India, dated 7th May, 1885 (T).

"You have also written to the Nawab Sahib Bahadur that there were many wahabis and Mullahs in Bhopal, who were known enemies of the British Government and that you would consider him responsible for their actions. Such ideas were never entertained about the Nawabs of this State before your time I do not know of these alleged wehabis and declared enemies of the British Government, who have been called in and employed by the State. Kindly supply me with a list of their names as the removal of notorious criminals and the enemies of the British Government is a duty of the State.

"Such baseless and contrary to experience accusation in writing could only be taken for attempts to unjustifiably level charges against the Nawab Sahib Bahadur of enmity towards the British Government and to insult me. They are also calculated to ruin the administration, and encourage the enemies of the State in the mischief making activities.

"I have seen the reign of Her Highness the late Ruler and for the last 17 years have been ruling the State single handed. Throughout this long period, prior to your arrival, none of the officers at Sehore or Indore, with the exception of yourself, ever called any of the State servants a Wahabi, recommended persons to member of the ruling family or the State officials for employment, intervened in the State revenue administration, interfered in the private and family affairs of the Ruler, accused State subjects or servants of disloyalty towards the British Government or acted in violation of the stipulations of the treaty. The Nawab could not be held responsible for the actions of state servants while I am at the helm of affairs. Your remark that you would consider him responsible for the conduct of the Wahabis is quite unwarranted according both to Sate and the British laws. The honour and status of the Nawab has been permanently recognised by the British Government to be equal to that of the Ruler of Bhopal without Ruler's powers, and your entertaining such ideas against him is not only as insult to him but also to me, for he is the consort of the Ruler and no state servant, who could at any time be unjustifiably accused by you. Could anybody be considered a Wahabi, simply because some enemies or ill-wishers of the State say so, although his conduct might have shown no disloyalty towards the Government and

nothing except loyalty to the State the goodwill of for the British Government. Could the State be deemed an enemy of the British Government because of such baseless reports? Not Nawab Sahib but I am responsible for the actions of my subjects or servants. Could you prove that a State servant, alleged to be a Wahabi, from the time we entered in the treaty relations has, at any time, caused religious stir or created disaffection towards the British people, either at the time of the Indian Mutiny or the Afghan war. Consequently when there is no foundation for these reports your entertaining these ideas concerning the Nawab, my consort, gives me pain and these sentiments can only be considered as an insult to the honour of the Sate and as an encouragement to its enemies.

(Confidential-Bhopal State Notes Documents for reference to the INDIAN STATES COMMITTEE A.(a) I, VI and XIII Volume I—pp 5-6. Bombay, Times Press (1928)

Extract Of Kharita Of Their Highness The Shahjehan Begum Dated 1st April, 1886, To his Excellency The Viceroy:—

I can assure Your Excellency that it was not until the recent complications that I was aware that any faults in my administration were set down to my husband's interference. I married my present husband Syed Mohammad Siddiq Hasan Sahib in 1871, and the marriage was duly approved by the Government of Earl Mayo. In June of the same year I appointed him Naib Diwan of the State; and the appointment was on the 30th June cordially approved of by the Political Agent Colonel Osborne. On 17th December 1872, The Government of India conferred upon my husband the title of the Nawab Walajah Amirul Mulk Bahadur, a mark of their high esteem, and since that time my husband has ceased to hold any office in the State. A further honour was confered on my husband in 1877. On the 16th January of that year I was informed that His Excellency the Viceroy had been pleased to order Her Majesty the Empress of India. Up to the end of 1884, I certainly under the impression that my husband enjoyed the confidence of the several Political Agents who have from time to time resided at my Court. In their correspondence with me my husband was alluded to in the highest terms. Colonel Bannerman was officiating as Governor-General's Agent in 1883 and 1884; and in December 1883 he visited Bhopal,

and after his visit I received a letter of the 12th December from Colonel Kincaid to the effect that the Agent was much pleased with his administration and that my husband had most/ably seconded my efforts.

(Confidential-BHOPAL STATE-Notes and Documents for reference to the INDIAN STATES COMMITTEE-A. (a) I, VI and XIII Volume I, Bombay, The Times Press (1928) p. 18.

## REFERENCES

1. "He possessed amazing physical strength....In the morning he would take exercise for two or three hours with clubs weighing thirty seers, and three are many stories to feats of his strength. He lifted up a Nilgai (killed by him) with one hand could draw a leather bucket full of water from a well, for which the strength of two bullocks is normally required. He was in the habit of consuming some eight seers of condensed milk daily after his exercise. He was also a man of letters. His knowledge of medicine was very extensive. He had also started a Mercantile House which he named Lillahi (the Goddy) with branches in Mecca, Medina and Egypt which offered many convenient facilities to pilgrims on route to Mecca, whereby they could obtain drafts in Mecca and Medina against cash deposits. The business also dealt on a large sale in graien, cloth and pearls.

   (Condensed form Tazkirai-Baqui-By Nawab Sultan. p. 51-59)

   (A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sands by C.U. Aitchison, Vol- IV Superintendent Government Printing Calcutta

   (1909 p. 286.)

2. Nawad Shahjehan Begum, Tajul Iqbal-History of Bhopal p. 142.

   "In 1897 the state coinage was abolised and British currency was introduced in its stead, the rate of exchange being fixet at 124 Bhopal Rupees to 100 British Rupees.

   (A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sands by C.U. Aitchison, Vol- IV Superintendent Government Printing Calcutta, 1909.)

3. Nawab Sultanjehan Begum "An Account of my life." Vol. I,P. 166-67.
4. Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, "Defence of Siddiq Hasan" pp. 3-8 condensed.
5. Joseph Chally, "Administrative Problems in British India".
6. (Hayati-Shahjehani by Her Highness Nawab Sultanjehan Begum, Bombay The Times Press (1927) p. 294.

# 7

# Sultan Jehan Begum (1901-1926)

On the death of her mother, Sultan Jehan Begum acceded to the Masnad on July 4, 1901. Her eldest son, Nasrullah Khan was duly recognised as Heir-Apparent. An agreement was signed by the latter undertaking that (i) he would be faithful to the State (ii) will never have any dealings with persons ill-disposed towards Durbar, (iii) will never change his religion, (iv) will treat all members of his family with affection and courtesy and will never take second wife, (v) will accept any Jagir and will never incur any debt; (vi) will not communicate direct with officers of British Government, nor make any complaint against parents. (vii) In the management of his Jagir he will comply with the laws and usage of the State (viii) will abstain from all ungentlemanly and undesirable pursuits (ix) will pay due regard to his brother, and officials of the State.

Nawab Sultanjehan's husband, Ahmed Ali Khan * was given the title of "Wazirud Daula, Ihtishamul-Mulk-Alijah". He did suddenly on 4th January 1902, most probably of heart failure. It was rumoured that the same night he had hatched a plan for general retrenchment because of the weak financial position of the State. His Jagir was reverted to the State; Her Highness being overtaken with grief, she went on a pilgrimage to Hijaz in 1904. Nawab Nasrrullah Khan was left in Bhopal who was assisted by Moimil Maham and Nasirul Maham. Her Highness had three sons:- (I) Mohd Nasrullah Khan (2) Mohd. Ocaidullah Khan (3) Mohd. Hamidullah Khan.

In 1905, Her Highness was conferred the title of G.C.I.E.at the hands of Prince and Princess of Wales at Indore. In 1908, Lord Kitchner visited Bhopal and was given grand reception.

**Nawab Ahmad Ali Khan:** When Nawab Sikandar Begum went to a Darbar at Agra she was sent to Jalalabad for Mian Ahmad Ali Khan, who was only nine years of age at the time. He was brought to her by his maternal uncle, Aftab Ali Khan. As the Rulers of Bhopal and Jalalabad belonged originally to one family, Her Highness Sikandar Begum took Ahmad Ali Khan with her to Bhopal,with the intention of marrying him to her grand-daughter, Nawab Sultan Jehan Begum. This was in 1283 A.H. Arrangements were made for the education of the young Nawab, but Her Highness died in 1288. A.H. However, the wishes of Her Highness were respected, and the Nawab was married to Nawab Sultan Jehan Begum and the title of "Naziruddaula, Sultan Dola" and a Jagir of Rs. 40,000 a year were conferred on him.

Mian Ahmad Ali Khan was educated in the Oriental languages till he reached his majority. On account of his intelligence, he made rapid progress. He had many opportunities of gaining experience in the affairs of the world and made good use of his advantages. On the accession of Her Highness to the throne of Bhopal, the Nawab consort brought about many reforms without loss of time, but his good work was cut short by is untimely death. Whatever assistance he gave to Her Highness was valuable owing to his sound judgement and long experience. At the time of the installation of Her Highness, the Begum, Colonel Meade, Acting to the Governor-General in Central India, while conferring on him the title of Nawab Ehtishamul Mulk, Alijah granted by the Government of India, spoke as follows:—

> "But above all, I am glad to think that the Nawab Consort, Ehtishamul Mulk, Alijah, Ahmad Ali Khan to whom I offer my hearty congratulations, Your Highness has as adviser and helper in close communion with yourself, whose tried experience will assist and guide you governing your State."

An Agricultural Bank was also established in the Eastern district for social development of women-folk. Her Highness started Prince of Wales Club at Ali Manzil. Furniture, books, periodicals, and the materials for indoor and outdoor games, suitable for women, were supplied by the State. Her Highness founded King Edward Museum. It was housed in a handsome building of red sandstone

situated in the heart of the city. (At present Moulana Azad Central Library is housed here.)

In November 1909, Lord and Lady Minto visited Bhopal and were accorded warm reception. His Excellency in his address remarked:—

"Your interest in the advance of education, especially in the higher education of your chiefs, your recognition of the importance of religious instructions, your gift to institutions your deep sympathy with the education of your sex, your princely generosity towards the poor and destitute should contribute to the stability of a native State."

His Excellency also laid the foundation-stone of a magnificent building, "Minto Hall" (now it is functioning as an Assembly Hall).

In 1909, Her Highness established a Land Records office for the preservation of all documents relating to the tenure of land. A Survey class for the training the village Patwaris was opened.

As sugarcane was extensively cultivated in Ichavar, an experiment was made in the direction of establishing a sugar factory there, Taqavi system was re-introduced with fresh regulations. Because of its attending drawbacks, Financial year was discarded and Fasil calender was adopted for revenue purposes.

Industrial and Agricultural exhibitions were encouraged by Her Highness as it tended to promote Arts and Crafts and bring about a reorientation of outlook among the people.

Hitherto, Ahamadabad palace was the only building in Bhopal that was lit by electricity. Steps were taken for supplying electric light to the whole city and a power station was erected below the Moti Mahal on the edge of the lake.

The following excellent buildings were constructed in her reign: the Courtesy, the Revenue Court, the Public Library, the Qiranus-Saaden, the Civil Club, Minto Hall, P. W. D. Office and Alexandra High School. Under this head may be included extension of water supply. The original water works were erected by the Nawab Qudsia Begum at her own cost. As the population was on the increase, Her Highness installed two new pumping engines, one at Ahmadabad and the other at Kebala.

Her Highness formulated plans for new settlement throughout the State for a term of 19 years. The work commenced in right earnest in the year 1908 and measures were also taken to safeguard the position of cultivators who had frequently suffered at the hands of Mustajirs in the past. By the new settlement, the revenue returns increased from 18 lakhs to over 359 lakhs. The cultivators paid their dues punctually and in full to the Mustajirs and the latter were equally punctual in their payments to the State. Moreover, not less than 144,765 bighas of new land were brought under cultivation. The number of persons engaged in agricultural work also increased in comparison with previous years.

The Bhopal Police was very efficient and brought about a considerable shrinkage of crimes. Government of India offices who visited Bhopal in 1909 remarked that the Bhopal police was superior to those of any other State. Indeed, some of the officers and sepoys were as smart and capable as any that could be found among the Government police throughout India.

The Military was also brought to a high state of efficiency. Her Highness actively and generously helped the British Government with manpower resources during the Great War 1914-18. Lord Chelmsford was pleased to remark in 1918:— "Your Highness had rendered in so many varied ways towards the prosecution of War, placed all the resources of the State at His Majesty's disposal, published a manifesto which was of high value to the Government, presented to the Government valuable motor car and launches, besides making many generous subscriptions of the various War funds and charities". Further, on 19th February 1923, Lord Reading remarked:—"Your Highness placed the whole resource of your state at the disposal of the British Crown, that your Heir Apparent Nawab Nasrullah Khan,* volunteered his personal services a the front and that moral and material support of a most valuable kind was constantly tendered."

Moreover gleanings from WAR ACCOUNT[2] reveal that "Durbar offered to forego for five years he recovery from the Jagirdars of Zare—Panjum (115th) if 500 men (recruits) were forthcoming. Five bighas of culturable land were allotted in Muaffi, for life, as a reward for each recruit two bighas of culturable land were

given in Muafi for bringing in a follower. So long as the recruit was on active service Rs. 5/- per mensem were given for maintenance of his dependents. In the case of a follower an allowance of Rs. 2/- a month was granted. All Jagirdars were rewarded with Jagir, increments and rent of Muafis in recognition of their services in connection with the War. No less generous were the rewards to Mansabdars for their recruiting services. The children of recruits were offered special facilities for free education and scholarships. Persons willingly enlisting in the army were granted bonus of Rs 50/-.

Towards 1921, on the recommendations of Prince Hamidullah Khan Chief Secretary, a trial was given to the policy of prohibition and distillation throughout the State. This brought about a decrease of three lakhs of rupees in excise revenue. Its imports was, however, permitted for bona fide medical purposes, and for personal use of those whose religion did not forbid drinking. Her Highness had remarked in reviewing the Annual Administration Report for 1917-18:- "We have never liked the revenues derived from excise duties, on religious and moral grounds, and it is our earnest desire that the commodities from which liquor is manufactured may be utilised in some other way even if to causes a loss to the State, and we are ready and willing to bear a part of this loss personally and privately".

In 1922, separate Chemical Laboratory was also started in Bhopal to analyses and examine the natural products and to find out their various uses.

Her Highness established Lady Hardinge Infant Home, a place where poor infants were brought up and given a suitable training and made "feeder for the Zenana Medical College of Delhi, on a small scale."

Her Highness was a great patron of learning. She started Sultania Girls' School, Alexandira Noble School (now known as Hamidia High School) and Asifia Training School. The opening of the Hamidia Library formed an important landmark in the educational police consistently pursued by Her Highness. It contained some good books on Islamic culture, both in occidental and oriental languages. Moreover free, compulsory primary education was introduced in the city. Compulsory Education Act was passed in 1918.

On the occasion of the Prince of Wales' visit on 4th February 1922, Her Highness announced a new constitution for the Bhopal State which consisted of the establishment of an Executive Council of State and a Legislative Council. The function of the Executive Council was to assist Her Highness in the administration of the State by disposing of certain classes of business assigned to it and by advising Her Highness on other metters reserved for her orders. The president of the Council was Her Highness herself. Other members were:

(1) Nawab Nasrulla Khan

(2) Nawab Obaidulla Khan.

(3) Nawab Hamidulla Khan

(4) Maulvi Mohammad Matinuzaman.

(5) Sir Israr Hasan Khan

(6) Sir Oudh Narain Bisariya.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in reply to an address presented to him remarked "Your Highness in held as a wise and enlightened rule, and to the personal interest which you ever display in ensuring the well being of your subjects. The decision of associating your subjects more closely with your Government, is a signal proof of this interest. I am convinced has this generous step will evoke the warmest gratitude in the hearts of your people".

On the same evening the opening ceremony of the Bhopal High Court was performed by Prince of Wales. This High Court was formed on the pattern of the British India High Courts.

In 1903, the city of Bhopal was made a municipality. Bhopal Municipal Act was passed in 1916. The Municipal Board consisted of twenty members with a non-official chairman. The Board acted through a number of committees dealing with different sections of municipal administration under the heads of finance, Municipal lands, public health, engineering and waterworks. The Board presented an address to Lord Chelmsford in 1918 and also contributed a substantial amount of money for war purposes Municipal Committees for health were established in all tehsils and villages.

The event in the year 1924-25 brought in a turn in the destiny of Prince Hamidulla Khan. His elder brothers, Nawab Nasrulla Khan, the Heir-Apparent and Nawab Obaidulla Khan called the "Mohsinul-Mulk" in recognition of his munificent benefactions to the country met their untimely death after prolonged illnesses. Prince Habibulla Khan, son of Nawab Nasrulla Khan, tried up to the hilt, to become Heir-Apparent in place of his father, but could not succeed. In 1926, after much discussion, and he it confessed, some lobbying, the Begum was allowed to break the usual, though not the universal, Muslim custom of premogeniture and nominated her younger son a successor, in place of the son of her deceased elder son. Having secured her point she abdicated."[4] This was obvious in view of the fact that old age and successive bereavements had combined to make the burden of Government too heavy for Her Highness. This was announced in the city nd its suburbs by the firing of guns from the Fort of Fatehgrh.

On arrival of Her Highness to India, a coronation Durbar was held on the 9th June, 1926. An impressive scene followed with the recitation of the holy Quran. Before placing the crown on his head she addressed him in the following words:- "God commands you to be just and kind and to help those near to you, to abstain from all evil and from all forbidden acts." During the delivery of her speech varying emotions of alternate grief and gladness were apparent among the audience for a considerable time.

On conclusion of the address, a salute of guns was fired from the Fort and a Company of Ulena stepped forward Her Highness, then placed with her own auspicious hands, upon His Highness's head the "Surpaich", and "Kalghi", which the State Qazi then adjusted, afterwards a necklace of pearls around his neck and rings of costly diamonds upon his fingers. His Highness then delivered an impressive address, in which he thanked Her Highness and said:—

"I see before me in your Highness's ideals of statesmanship, the most striking examples of them all. To walk in your footsteps will be my constant aim and the principles and traditions of your Highness's justice and fair dealings with your subjects, will be the guiding principle which I shall strictly keep before me. May God help me to adhere firmly and unflinchingly to those traditions, and

guide me along the path before me...You signify your abdication, yet over our hearts Your Highness still shall rule, and the impress of your Highness's devoted love for your people shall remain indelible."

Her Highness then rose and reciting a verse from the Holy Quran requested him to occupy the Chair upon the throne and kissed him upon his forehead. The whole scene was picturesque and full of pathos and reflected self-sacrifice, and a truly religious mind as well as a heart full of love and devotion for the Divine, so characteristic and emblematic of her whole life and nature.[5]

Her Highness proved herself firm and steadfast as flint in her determination and reminding us of the immortal words of Cleopatra, boldly affirmed—

> "My resolutions placed, and I have nothing of woman in me; now from head to foot I am marble constant."

Though in no sense narrow-minded, Her Highness Sultan Jehan was a true Musalman, a staunch and stern upholder of the tenets of her faith and a firm believer in the efficacy of religious training for the young. Though a vigorous advocate of social reform there are two points in which she differs from the common type of social reformer. The first is that she does not borrow her ideas from other people. Whatever they may be, her theories are her own and she has a way of holding on to them with considerable tenacity. The second is that she not only has theories but she endeavours to put them into practice. The Girls Schools in Bhopal are a practical proof of her real interest in female education. She was among the first to call attention to the decadence of the Yunani System of medicine, and at the same time, she opened a School (Tibbiya Asfia) in her own State for the training of the practitioners".[6]

Her Highness had a large number of useful books to her credit. The most important ones are:—"Hidayatuz-Zaujain" "Sabilul-Jinan", "Tandurusti" (Health), "Bachchon-ki-Parwarish", "Hidayat Timardari", "Maishat-o-Moashirat", Rauzatul Rayahin", "Akhtare-Eqbal", "Tazkirai-Baqui", "Hayati-Qudsi"

After relinquishing the reins of Government, she devoted the rest of her life to the uplift of the womenfolk and in this field her part can be said to be unique in the history of India.

## REFERENCES


* The Nawab Consort was an admirer of the Arts and Sciences. He was fond of sports, a marksman and a good horseman. He was a far-seeing careful, polite, obliging and fair-minded gentleman. He left three sons.

* (REPRESENTATIVE MEN OF CENTRAL INDIA. Illustrated-Published by C.B. Burrows, C/o Walliam Wilson and Co. Bombay. p. 7.)

1. Nawab Nasrullah Khan went to the theatre of war but invalidated under medical advice and hence left a Aden for India.
2. "India and the War" (1917-1918) published by the Imperial Publishing Company, Khoshla Brothers, Lahore p. 234-235.
3. Notification No 33 Dated with 5th May 192 and notification no. 10 dated 14. 9. 1921.
4. Lt General Sir George Munn:- "The Indian States and Princes" p. 213.
5. Asir-jadid [The New Epoch] Compiled by Mohd. Amin Zuheripp p. 14-22.
6. "Indian Princes and the Crown" Times of India Press, pp. 305-306.

# 8

# Nawab Hamidulla Khan (1926-1949)

His Highness was born at Sadar Manzil Palace on September 9, 1894. Nawab Sultan writes in Tuzuk Sultani:—

"My own joy at the birth of this child was unbounded. For since the death of Asif Jehan Begum, I had been depressed and melancholy, and there seemed to be no pleasure, no new vigour into my life, I felt as the withered and parched grass of the desert must feel when after long months of drought, it is again watered by the blessed rain from heaven: and I looked upon this child and an angel of mercy sent by the Great Consoler of human hearts."

From his infancy Her Highness took great care to bring him up on high lines and give him a training which would help him to develop his best qualities. Munshi Liaqat Ali (who later became Minister) was his private tutor. Riding and shooting was his favourite pastime in his leisure hours. After a few years His Highness entered the Alexandria Nobles School Bhopal which was founded particularly for the children of noble families of the State. Mr. C.H. Payne also worked as his tutor and endeavoured to make a public man of him, "A Gentleman of India".

In 1910, Her Highness sent him to M. A. O. College, Aligarh, so that he may acquire first hand knowledge of the ideas, aspirations, and thoughts of his co-religionists, as she herself says, "For Mohammadan students no college in India can be compared with the M. A. O. College. This is the only college where along with secular education the ideas of their religion, nationality, and faithfulness to the British Government are fully developed among the Muslim

students, and which is the centre of all future hopes and aspirations of Muslim India." "In a country like this, a free and easy intercourse of our Sardars and Jagirdar with the ordinary students of Indian universities should not be viewed from the point of desirability, but from that of possibility, for there are many amongst us, who would strongly object to their boys mixing freely with the students of University Colleges. My own intentions lie in the direction of a free and easy intercourse between boys of all classes."[2]

His Highness passed Matriculation Examination in 1911; Intermediate (Science) in 1913; and took B. A. degree in 1915 with Political Economy as his optional subject. In spite of all his princely dignity, he lived a very simple life, treating all his fellow-students with equality and always helping those who deserved and needed his assistance. The simple and dignified behaviour also impressed his teachers deeply.

His Highness was highly interested in all sorts of games. He has been the first class player in Cricket, Hockey, Tennis, Football and Polo, and the game of Cycle Poll is his own invention, so too say. In Aligath he infuseed a new life in the Polo Club. He took part in the tournaments of Bombay, Poona, Calcutta, Delhi, Lucknow and won cups.

In 1911, he participated in military sports of Gymkhana and won a prize. He took part in the Polo match and played against the Team of the Viceregal staff and came out victorious. In the World War II, he personally went to the War front and exhorted his soldiers to do their duties herocially.

He is an accomplished horseman and an excellent shot and a number of tigers have been shot dead by him while sitting in a car.

It was on the 16th April 1916, that he was appointed as the Chief Secretary to Her Highness. He inspected many important officers and submitted valuable and intelligent suggestions to Her Highness which were approved by her under the new constitution of 1922. His Highness had the onerous duties of the membership for Finance and Law and Justice and also of Political Department which he discharged with admirable skill and efficiency.

On assuming the reins of Government, His Highness made two important reforms of far-reaching effect e. g. separation of the

judiciary from the Executive and substitution of Ryotwari for Mustagiri system.

As regards administrative set-up certain powers and functions were formally entrusted to a Council of Ministers to be exercised by virtue of this delegated authority under the supervision of the Ruler and in his name. To each minister who was styled a Member, certain responsibilities were entrusted for a subject or subjects allocated to the departments dealing with the various aspects of State administration.

The Executive Council constituted the principal organ of Executive authority, the personal supervision of the Ruler contributed the element of co-ordination which interrelated the activities of the various departments in the public service.

The Legislative Council was inaugurated in 1927. It was composed of twenty-four members nominated and elected as follows:—

(i) Nominated Members 16 (a) Official 14; Non-Officia 2 (ii) Elected Members 8 (a) Representing revenue farmers 4; (b) Representing Trade and Commerce 2; (c) Representing town of Bhopal 2. The franchise was based on property and educational qualifications and was confined to men of over 21 years of age.

The Legislative Council had the power of inerpellation and moving resolutions on matter of public concern. It could enact and amend laws except those relating to itself, the High Court, the Army and Official Secrets. Every bill passed by the council would be submitted for the assent of His Highness.

The annual estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the State were laid before the Council and members were entitled to offer suggestions, which were submitted into to His Highness when he had to accord his final sanction to the estimates.

In the inaugural speech of the Council on September 6, 1927 His Highness summarised the aim and aspirations of the State policy as below:-

(1) Improvement of Communications including the extension of posts and telegraphs; (2) A well-defined land revenue policy;

(3) Further stability of land tennure; (4) Colonisation of tracts lying waste; (5) Improved methods of extensive and intensive cultivation. (6) An extensive survey of the State, (7) Further spread of education, (8) The provision of better facilities for medical relief; (9) Better hygienic conditions, improved drainage, prevention of epidemics and infectious diseases; (10) Supply of filtered water (11) Commercial and industrial development.

These targets were more or less achieved so far as the local conditions and finances of the State permitted.

Parallel to the Bhopal Legislative Council, Tehsil Councils and rural Communes or Panchayats were also formed on representative system.

In 1930, a Charity Home was established for the crippled, dumb, feeble and old people who were provided with fooding, lodging and clothing at the expense of the State.

## CHAMRER OF PRINCES

His Highness was twice elected as the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes once in 1931-32 and again in 1944-47 and took part in the important deliberations affecting the political evolution of the country.

"In a joint letter in 1935 from their Highnesses the Maharajas of Patiala and Bikaner and the Nawab of Bhopal to the Viceroy, they explained that there was no intention of going back on their general assent to join in a Federation, but that several points as now presented were unacceptable; that they did not agree that the British Parliament had power and these together with their objection to the warding of the Draft Instrument of Accession put at once before the Secretary of State...To this Sir Samuel properly replied that he could not believe that Highnesses "Had any intention of questioning their relations with King Emperor. This is a matter which admits of no dispute." He also showed that Paramountcy is almost untouched by Bill.[3]

In the words of Sir William Barton:—

"Nawab of Bhopal has played a prominent part in the Chamber of princes and has clearly identified himself with the leading group

of princes, practically, all Hindus known as the "Big Eight" at the Round Table Conference. He stands strongly for the British Connection."[4]

Shri V. P. Menon in his monumental work on Integration of India State gives the following vivid and graphic account of the Nawab's stewardship of the Chamder of Princes in those hectic day of political uncertainty and the later development leading to the merge of Bhopal in the Indian Union:

"About this time (1944) the Nawab of Bhopal was elected Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. He infused new life into the Chamber and forged that body into and effective instrument for developing the rulers into a "Third Force" in Indian politics. He was an advocate of a loose centre with residuary powers in the State."[4A]

"On April, 1946 at his interview with the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy, the Nawab of Bhopal made it clear that the Indian States wished to continue their existence with the Maximum degree of sovereignty. They desired no interference in their internal affairs by British India. He suggested the formation of a Privy Council of the States and British India on the lines contemplated in the Simon Report. The Nawab said that the general view of the Rulers was that if there to be two States in India, there was no reason why a Third India composed of the States should not be recognised...He pleaded that paramountcy should not be transferred to an Indian Government." [4B]

With the anouncement of the plan of independence of the country, the Nawab of Bhopal resigned in 1947 from the Chancellorship of the Chamber of Princes.

In a letter to the Viceroy, he stated:—

"The State of Bhopal does not wish to remain associate in any manner whatsoever with the Chamber of Princes or any of its subordinste organisations. It cannot therefore be represented by the Standing Committee of that body and will negotiate direct with the successor Government of British India in regard to its future political relationship with Pakistan and Hindustan."[4C]

It was after protracted negotiation and the Nawab ultimately agree to sign the Instrument of Accession, and even then he made the

stipulation that his a signature should be kept secret for 10 days after the transform of power. This request was complied with and later announcing his decision to accede the Nawab wrote to Sardar Patel:—

"I do not disguise the fact that while the struggle was on, I used every means in my power to preserve the independence and neutrality of my State. Now that I have conceded defeat, hope that you will find that I can be as staunch a friend as I have been an inveterate opponent. I harbour on ill-feelings to was anyone, for throughout I have been treated with consideration and have received understanding and courtesy from your side, I now wish to tell you that so long as you maintain your present firm stand against the disruptive forces in the country and continue to be a friend of the State's as you have shown you are, will find in me a loyal and faithful ally.

In reply Sardar wrote:—

"Quite candidly, I do not look upon the accession of your State to the Indian Dominion as either a victory for us or defeat for you. It is only right and propriety which have triumphed in the end and, in that triumph, you and I have played our respective roles. You deserve full credit for having recognised the soundness of the position and for the courage, the honesty and the boldness of having given up your earlier stand which according to us was entirely antagonistic to the interests as much of India as of your own State. I have noted with particular pleasure your assurance of support to the Dominion Government in combating disloval element irrespective of caste, creed or religion and your offer of loyal and faithful friendship. During the last few months, it had been a great disappointment and regret to me that your undoubted talents and abilities were not at the country's disposal in the critical times through which we were passing and I therefore particularly value this assurance of co-operation and friendship." [4D]

## FEDERAL FINANCE COMMITTEE

During 1936-37, Bhopal was the venue of the Federal Finance Committee of the Chamber of Princes, under the chairmanship of His Highness the Ruler of Bhopal. His Highness once remarked, "A number of points which my Government had put forward to

facilitate the consummation of the federal idea, have been satisfied...My belief in an all. India federation holds, and nothing will be refused or withheld from it that can be given by way of moral and material support consistently with the maintenance intact of the political identity, administration independence and sovereign status of the States." (Bhopal in 1936-37 by Publicity officer, Bhopal)

## EDUCATION

With effect from Ist July, 1933, The Model School Bhopal was raised to High School. This brought number of high schools in Bhopal city to three up to 1927, the Education Department remained amalgamated with the Home Department. Thereafter it was separated and the post of a Director of Public Instruction was created on October 12,1927.

Moreover, during the reign of His Highness, the State maintained eight middle Schools of which two were in the city and six in the district and tehsil areas. To promote the cause of female education, Sultania Girls School was developed into full-fledged high School affiliated to the Ajmer Board. On 31 st May, 1949, there were 208 primary Schools functioning in the State. Moreover the Government Hamidia College was opened in 1946.

## TITLES

The Rulers of Bhopal had all along encouraged their subjects by the award of titles and honours in recognition of meritorious service. A list was usually issued on the birthday of the Ruler announcing the grant by him of titles, ranks, medals and other tokens of honour. The practice continued through out the whole of His Highness's regime.

## PROHIBITION RESCINDED

For a time prohibition was a success. But gradually the consumption of liquor was resumed by the drinking population. Breaches of law began to grow in volume from year to year. Illicit distillation, sale and import was rife, and the immense financial loss, which the State had sustained for close upon six years, did not seem to bring any compensation in the shape of public weal. The adjoining British territories and Indian states continued "wet" and offered an even

ready source of unauthorised supplies by sumugglers. The heavy financial burden which a proper enforcement of the prohibition would entail on top of the less of revenue, was unquestionably beyond the resources of Government, It was all too clear that Excise revenue for the bordering territories was growing considerably inflated, thanks to the purchases of liquor made there by Bhopal subjects. Various sections of the people, apprehensive of Punishment, which was meted out in cases of detected infringement, were petitioning Government to abolish the prohibition. After very mature consideration, Government reluctantly rescinded, as from 1ts of June 1927, "till such time as conditions favourable to prohibition be established." This, however, increased the financial resources of the State and placed it on an even keel.

## INAUGURATION OF INDUSTRIAL ERA

An industrial era dawned in Bhopal with the initiation of important schemes of industrial development. A Department of Economic Advice was created under Sir Joseph Bhore, who was entrusted with the task of planning. Consequently, the Cotton Textiles, Sugar, Refrigerated products, Match Factories, Card Board Factory, and Sehore Sugar Faceory, were installed which paved the way for flourishing of other industries in the State. Many geological surveys were also undertaken experts which threw light on the future potentialities of the State.

## POLITICAL LIFE

Prior to 1832, the political atmosphere was unruffled by any unpleasant incident in the political horizon but there after partly due to the external influences exercised by the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha, and partly to the economic distress of the local population, it was marred. Local weekly organs "Praja Pukar", and "Prja Mitra" succeeded to the role of championing the cause of the local population.

The external Press, also, fanned the local agitators. The Government of Bhopal had to take action against two Delhi papers of which one offered an unconditional apology while against another

("RIYASAT") the State had to carry on a protracted prosecution extending over a number of years which involved large sums money from the coffers of the State.

To meet the needs of internal control, the Bhopal Press Act was enacted in 1935. During 1936 only, on less than 18 newspapers issued in Bhopal. There were about 35 committees for educational and political purposes.[5]

Nearly all key posts were occupied by the Punjab Muslims and other outsiders. Anjuman Khuddamiwatan was the forceful forum for the local people to assert their cause. This Anjuman was originally started by Mr. Syed Hami Rizvi, Vakil a staunch nationalist and Mr. Shakir Ali Khan, a prominent leader of Bhopal. They published a weekly paper, "Sobhe-Watan" which was the mouth piece of that Anjuman. After sometimes Mr. Hamid Rizvi seceded from that body. The following were the important members of the Anjuman:-

(1) Inayatualla Khan Tarz Mashiriqui-President:

(2) Shakir Ali Khan,

(3) Maulvi Ashar Husain,

(4) Bhagwan Dayal Nishat

(5) Ahmad Makki.

(6) Hafiz Ali,

(7) Fazal Ansari.

They demanded the termination of the services of the new Inspector-General, Khowja Mohammad Akram because of the maltreatment of the local people at his hands. He was the brother-in-law to the Chief Justice, Mr. Alamuddin Khan.

Anjumani Khuddamiwatan had moblised public opinion and staged a demonstration which was taken to be a "Civil Disobedience Movement." Their leaders named above were arrested and brought in chains before the Court. A large force of the Military and the Police was posted at the High Court where the prisoners were tried and sentenced. The public was visibly moved. Later on, a public meeting was held on August 26, 1934 wherein an independent inquiry under the Presidentship of Nawab Gohar Taj (Heir Apparent)

about the arrest was demanded. Mr. Quddus Sahbai, and Maulana Said Razmi made stirring speeches on this occasion.

State People's Conference was organised in 1936-37. It was supposed to be a national platform to achieve civil liberties in the State. In August 1937, the All India States People's Conference passed a resolution condemning the "growing tendency of the Bhopal State towards communalism", it deplored "the encroachments on civil liberties in the State; and protested against the ill-treatment meted out to political prisoners in that State as evinced by the sad demise of Bhagwan Das Rathi.

Mr. Abu Said Bazmi (later editor Medina 1938) published a very sensational book "Riyasat-ki-Siyasat" stating the grievances which may be summed up as follows:—

(1) Restrictions on fundamental rights.

(2) Want of proper sanitation,

(3) Back of educational facilities,

(4) Squandering of the State,

(5) Curbing the local talents,

(6) Suppression of the Freedom of the Press,

(7) Exorbitant rate of land revenue,

(8) Maltreatment of cultivators and lack of proper education at facilities for them. He tried to show that Bhopal was reactionary and feudal and insisted that Bhopalis should be preferred to non-Bhopalis in the matter of appointments in Government service.

## BHOPAL MILITARY FORCE AND WORLD WAR II

Bhopal army consisted of two classes of troops respectively called the "A" and "B" under the command of His Highness the Ruler. "A" Class troops consisted of Sultania Infantry and the Goharitaj Own Company. "B" Class troops consisted of the establishment of the Fatehgarh fort and the State Bond. The officers received instruction in the various courses of Indian Army Training Centres.

During the World War II. His Highness boldly supported the Allies who were at war with forces of tyranny and aggression. He

unreservedly placed his services and the resources of the State at the disposal of His Imperil Majesty the King Emperor. His Highness appealed to all his people to stand united and firm and leave nothing undone to help him and his government in accomplishing the task ahead of them. He also advised his brethren throughout the Empire to make united efforts to support Great Britain at that critical moment. He appealed to traders and businessmen to desist from profiteering. Other miscellaneous activities towards War Efforts were:-

(1) Formation of the Bhopal Civic Guards,

(2) Establishment of the forum of National War Front and Village Guards.

(3) Establishment of the Civil Defence Department that had the following sections:- Police, rationing supplies, transport rail and road and communications; Intelligence and Information, A.R.P., Civic Guards, Prisoners of War, War Committees, War funds, Welfare of troops, Internal security, Red Crescent.

Bhopal military units went overseas to participate in the War. His Highness also visited Indian troops in Libya, Sudan, and Eritrea and Egypt. He was present at the battlefield of Keren, where he witnessed the classical assault which ended in the subjugation of that strong Italian base. To quote the 'Statesman' dated December 10, 1941:- "As solider, statesman, and sportsman, His Highness is thoroughly fitted to organise and direct Bhopal's War effort to hundred per cent efficiency and utility." To look after the welfare of soldier's families, His Highness appointed lady Bhore as welfare officer in charge of this work among the families of men serving overseas. He also made special medical grant for them. Lady Bhore discharged her duties conscientiously and did all that she could for those families. The Bhopal State Forces wase disbanded in 1949.

The Bhopal State Forces were manned predominately by Muslims drawn from Pakistan; their disbandment would require delicate handling. The Services in Bhopal, especially the Police, were overwhelmingly Muslim; the position called for readjustment. These were some of the consideration which prompted the

Government of India to take over Bhopal as a Chief Commissioner's province.

## RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT FOR BHOPAL

In April 1947, a new Ministry with a non-official majority was appointed by His Highness. It consisted of the following:—

Shri Chatur Narain Malviya, Prime Minister of Bhopal, General Secretary Afro—Asian Solidarity and World Peace. He headed many peace Conferences.

Shri Muzzaffar Ali Khan, Revenue Minister BPL & Member of M. P. Waqf Board, Bhopal

Shri Syed Fateh Ali, Assistant Private Secretary to Nawab Sajida Sultan, Ruler of Bhopal.

Shri Kamta Prasad, ex-Finance Minister BPL, and ex-Chairmen Bhopal H/S Consumer's Store, BPL

(1) Raja Sir Oudh Narain Bisarya...... Prime Minister.

(2) Mr. K. F. Haider.......Finance Minister.

(3) Mr. Muzzaffar Ali Khan.....Revenue Minister.

(4) Mr. Saidulla Khan Razmi (Congress).......Education and Public Health Minister.

(5) Mr. Bharon Prasad (Hindu Mahasabha).....Public Works Minister.

During March 1948, His Highness expressed a wish to retain Bhopal as a separate unit and said, "I will not be a party to or entertain any suggestion......that envisages in any form a merger of Bhopal with any Province or any combination of States which entails any alteration in Bhopal present boundary and status.....He expressed the confidence that the people of Bhopal, 'will not allow themselves to be influenced by any rumour to the contrary which might emanate from any quarter and will stand firm to their loyalty to which they gave spontaneous expression throughout my tour of the State." He announced the grant of responsible Government and sanctioned remissions of land revenue arrears totalling Rs, 39, 85,00.

The previous Ministry was taken to be "shoddy, deceptive," consisting of reactionary elements which the Praja Mandal totally rejected. As a result of the negotiations with the mandal a new Ministry was formed with the following panel:—

(1) Raja Sir Oudh Narain, Prime Minister.

(2) Pandit Chatur Narain Malviya, Deputy Prime Minister.

(3) Nawabzada Rashiduzzafa Khan.

(4) Mr. K. F. Haider.

(5) Mr. Mahmood Husain.

(6) Rai Lala Mulk Raj.

(7) Syed Zahoor Hashmi.

(8) Mr. Kamta Prasad.

(9) Seth Pratab Mal.

Announcing the constitutional reforms, His Highness said: "It will be my constant endeavour to reciprocate this trust by affording my new ministers every support and assistance in my power so ttat they may devote themselves wholeheartedly to the service of my people and to the impartial safeguarding of the inalienable rights of all my subject of whatever caste or creed."

In October 1948, His Highness proceeded for Haj pilgrimage and left the administration of the State to Nawab Abida Sultan Begum (Heir-Apparent); Raja Oudh Narain; Mr. Salamuddin Khan; Col. Rashiduzzafar Khan Nawabzada.

On October 14, 1948, in agreement with Praja Mandal, a Drafting Committee for the constitution of Bhopal was appointed comprising of Mr. Justice Mahabir Prasad, Mr. Kamta Prasad, Mr. Rai Lala Mulk Raj, Mr. Sultan Mohammad Khan, Mr. Raghwar Dayal, Mr. Syed Hamid Rizvi, Mr. Rajindra Narain Bisarya and Mr. Mohd. Athar was to act as Secretary of the Committee.

The new Bhopal cabinet was taken as a smoke-screen and the middle of December 1948 a strong agitation unprecedented in the history of Bhopal commenced which led to the arrest of the demonstrators including Thakur Lal Singh, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Mr. Bharion Prasad, Uddhav Das Mehta and Mr. Neutan Kumar Telang. The State Police used fire brigade to disperse the

crowd and thousands of gallons of icy water were sprayed. Copies of 'Vir Arjun', 'Netaji', 'Milap' were confiscated. There was a firing in Bareilly town also. Hartal was observed by cloth, gold and silver and foodgrain dealers of the city. Pandit Malviya was summoned to Delhi where he contacted Sardar Patel.

On January 14, 1949, The Bhopal District Congress Committee was held to be a hostile body and was consequently dissolved by a Resolution of the Madhya Bharat Congress Working Committee. The Bhopal District Congress Committee defied the above resolution and challenged the constitutionality of the same, but of no avail and an ad hoc Congress Committee was formed Sardar Patel was much concerned over Bhopal affairs and remarked, "I have not intervened because I feel that the Nawab will see to reason and his people will be able to settle the matter themselves. Today if High Highness makes mistakes it is the duty of myself— and the Dewan and his ministers to point it out. Do not, therefore, get panicky over the developments in Bhopal."[7]

It was on January 23, 1949 that Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma was sentenced to eight month's imprisonment for contravening restrictions on public meetings. Some to her Satyagrahis were also sentenced to four month's imprisonment. This led to hunger strike by four Congress-men. Thereafter, Mr. D. P. Menon, Adviser or the States' Ministry, Government of India visited Bhopal and considered "the local civil disobedience meaningless and unnecessary" and added that "amicable settlement would be found". He also said that Government of India desire that there should be no more agitation or repetition of the incidents. As a sequel. to this, shops re-opened on January 26, 1949. By a Firman it was announced that all the four Congress ministers had tendered their resignations, which had been accepted. The Cabinet was dissolved and full charge of the cabinet was taken by His Highness. Pandit Maviya went on a 21 days fast as a protest. Simultaneously, the State Ministry also urged the cessation of agitation in Bhopal. Political detenus were, however, released in gradual stages. The Agreement for merger was signed by the Ruler in April 30, 1949, and the State was taken over by the Union Government through a Chief Commissioner on June 1, 1949.

Bhopal Merger Agreement ran as follows:—[8]

(1) The administration of Bhopal State shall be taken over and carried on by the Government of India and that for a period or five years next the State will be administered as a Chief Commissioners' Province.

(2) On the expiry of this period of five years the future administrative arrangements of the State may have to be reveiwed.

(3) The Nawab shall be entitled to all the personal rights, privileges, immunities and dignities enjoyed by him as the Ruler of Bhopal.

(4) The Nawab shall be entitled to receive from the Government of India for his privy purse a sum of rupees eleven lakhs per annum free of all taxes and his successors shall, with effect from the date of succession, be entitled to receive from the Government of India for his privy purse a sum of rupees nine lakhs per annum free of all taxes.

(5) The income derived annually from the share of the Nawab in the original investment by Qudsia Begum in the Bhopal State Railway (Rs. 5, 50,000) shall be treated as the personal income of the Nawab and shall be paid by the Government of India to the Nawab and is successors.

(6) The Nawab shall be entitled to the full ownership, use and enjoyment of all private properties belonging to him immediately before the date of transfer.

(7) The Government of India agree that the succession to the theone of Bhopal State shall be governed by and regulated in accordance with the provision of "The Succession to the Throne of Bhopal Act 1947."

(8) No inquiry shall be made and no action shall be taken, against the Nawab, whether in his personal capacity or otherwise, in respect of anything done by or under his authority during the period of his administration of the State.

(9) The Government of India agree to continue in service all permanent members of the public services of the State on conditions which will not be less advantageous than those on which they were serving at the date of transfer and for any ıeason, reduction of staff is found necessary to pay reasonable compensation to those affected. The Government of India guarantee the continuance of all pensions and leave salaries, continuance by competent authority of the State.

(10) The action shall be taken, and no proceedings, civil or criminal, shall be instituted, against any person in respect of any act in good faith done or omitted to be done in the execution of his duty as a servant of the State before the date of transfer.

Accordingly, the State was taken over by the Centre on June I, 1949. and Mr. N. B. Bonarjee was appointed the first Chief Commissioner. The latter reorganised the Bhopal Secretariat. During his time, refugee rehabilitation was under taken. A Development Committee was appointed which prepared the First Five Year Plan of Bhopal.

On April 30, 1950, Mr. N. B. Bonarjee, was transferred to Hydrabad as the Chairman of the Public Service Commission and Shri Vishwanathan, Adviser to the Government of Madhya Bharat was appointed Chief Commissioner of Bhopal in his place.

Mr. N. B. Bonarjee was an experienced man from I. C. S. cadre. He was a strict disciplinarian and an anglophile in manners and address. He tightened up his control over the administration. None who was guilt of dereliction of duty was left unscathed. During his time officials and other servants of the State became a bit extra-careful about discharging their duties.

During Mr. Vishwanathan's time also, reorganisation of the Government departments was carried out and retrenchment of surplus and unqualified staff effected which resulted in some unemployment in the State. Bhopal Jagir jurisdictional owners were abolished and the estates of Sarfikhas, Idgah and Simla were divested of their revenue powers. An Advisory Council and an Advisory Committee were created to advise the administration in

the work of the State. The work of the refugee rehabilitation was intensified and the Five Year Plan of Bhopal was finalised.

The inside story of the Bhopal Merger has been described in the following words by Shri V. P. Menon, who was one of the main actors of that interesting political drama:—

The inside story of the Bhopal Merger has been described in the following words by Shri V. P. Menon. who was one of the main actor of that interesting political drama:—

In my conversation with the Nawab, I made it quite clear that, in my own opinion. Bhopal could not continue to exist as a separate State and that, as it has geographically, ethnically and culturally an affinity to Malwa, it was only right that it should merge with Madhya Bharat. As an immediate step, I suggested to him that the ministry should resign and that, pending a decision as to the future of Bhopal, he should take over the administration himself. The Nawab maintained that he had done all that could be expected of him and disclaimed any responsibility for the trouble, which had been created by what he called irresponsible cliques. At one stage he even contemplated abdication, leaving it to his successor to face the music. I persuaded him to put such thoughts out of his mind. We arrived at certain tentative conclusions which I promised to place before Sardar before we resumed further discussions.

I had conversations also with the ministers of Bhopal who urged that local plebiscite should be taken on the question of merger. I said that is was absolutely unnecessary; that even in the case of such large State as Gwalior and Indore we had not held plebiscite. I added that I could not believe to it be third intention to deny the representative character of Nehru, Sardar and the Central Cabinet whose policy, I personally had no doubt the people would endorse. The ministers ultimately agreed to accept Sardars decision.

The Sadar agreed with the tentative conclusions reached between the Nawab and myself, whereupon a communique was issued, the Bhopal ministry (headed by Shri Chaturnarain Malviya) resigned, and the Nawab took over the administration. We then started negotiations regarding the future of the State. The negotiations were prolonged and involved my having to make many trips to Bhopal. It became a joke with Sardar whenever I went to

Bhopal to describe the visit as a 'Pilgrimage'. The Nawab had an extraordinary passion for detail; every tentative conclusion had to be described the various stages of the negotiations. We eventually decided that the question of Bhopal's amalgamation with Madhya Bharat should be temporarily postponed and that, purely as a transitional arrangement, the state should be taken over as a Chief Commissioner's province.*

## REFERENCES


1. H. H. Maimona Sultan Shah Bano, Begum of Bhopal, "Iftikharul-Mulk" p. 4.
2. Nawab Sultan Jehan Begum, "The Higher Education of Indian Chief" pp. 12-13.
3. Sir George Mac-Munn—"Indian States and Princes" pp. 241-247.
4. Sir William Barton—"The Princes of India." p. 220.

4A V. P. Menon—"The Story of the Integration of the Indian States"

4B. Ibid p. 61-Orient Longmans Ltd. Bombay.

4C. Ibid. p. 84. (1956). p. 56.

4.D Ibid. p. 118-119.

5. For details please see Proceedings of Legislative Councils Bhopal September 1936, pp 11-13.
6. For deais see Sobhe-Watan dated June 26, 1934, and August 30, 1934.
7. Hindustan Times dated 24, 1. 49.
8. The White Paper on Indian States. pp. 226-228.

* V.P. Menon "*The Story of the Integration of Indian States*" Orient Longmans Ltd. Bombay 1956 pp. 304-305.

# 9

# Popular Ministry

Part "C" State Bill piloted in Indian Parliament which was calculated to secure "largest practicable measure of autonomy and responsible government" for the part 'C' States. It was later decided that Bhopal's new Legislature will consist of 30 members, of whom five will be members of the Scheduled Castes, and two of the scheduled tribes. The State was also entitled to send two representatives to the House of the people. The General Election was held in January-Febuary 1952, in which out of 30 seats, 25 were won by the Congress, 3 by independents, one by Jan Sangh and one by Hindu Mahasabha. Shri Saidulla Khan Razmi and Pandit Chatur-Narayan were elected members of the Council of States. In the Legislative Assembly, the following were the office-bearers:-

Speaker......Shri Sultan Mohammad Khan

Deputy Speaker.....Shri Laxmi Narayan Agarwal

Leader of the House.....Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma

Dy. Leader of the House....Maulana Tarzi Mashriqui

The first popular ministry of Bhopal was installed in March 1952, headed by Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma. The Ministers were:—

(1) Maulana Inayatulla Khan Tarzi Mashriqui.

(2) Shri Kamta Prasad (who resigned in 1953 due to some differences with the Party Leader).

(3) Shri Umrao Singh, Dy. Minister and then in 1954 raised to the status of Minister.

Members of the Bhopal Legislative Assembly are given in the list appended herewith.

Interesting stories are afloat about this election. We give below one such account given by Principal Prem Chand Malhotra which is a masterly description of scenes at polling station:

"The voters cannot read. Hence, they choose their candidate for whom they would vote by symbols pasted on the ballot boxes. A good many of them have perhaps not even handled such an attractive thing as the ballot paper, they fumble inside the polling chamber, they take time to insert properly the ballot papers lying in their hands. A few of them gave the impression that they have been pushed to the polling station, they did not know what for. As they came out, they evidently showed sign of relief as if they have cast off a load that was placed on their heads. Some voters were seen entering the polling chamber with a reverence, and they thought it fit to take off their shoes while performing the sacred task of casting their votes. It is not unusual for voters to come in groups; they come by villages and vote *enblock*. Probably they have been ferretted out of their homes (even the blind have not been spared) by the workers of the candidates. They follow the sheep instinct. They all vote for one symbol. A few of them even do not think it necessary to remember the symbol of candidate (not to say of names of candidates) even when the officer trying to help the candidate to cast the vote inquires, of such a Candidate, "Whom do you want to vote for?" The characteristic reply is "What do I know? I will vote for whom the others have voted. A voter complained that he could not find his box in the polling compartment. When inquired which his box was, he replied, "Box belonging to Daronia". Daronia is the name of a class among Gonds. The group or the communal instinct is very strong in villages and it regulates all their life and their actions. The women in Burca coming to the polling stations is not an unknown sight yet. At a polling station some men did not like the suggestion that women voters should be allowed to poll first in preference to men voters who had come at the station earlier. A few voters objected to the printing of make on their finger with the remark that this will burn their finger. Voters in rural areas seem to have shown very little interest it he candidates to the House of the

People. Having cast one vote in the State Assembly polling compartment, they do not know why they should be asked to do over the job again in another compartment. Delhi is far off so goes a trite saying. The candidates who want to be returned for the Parliament in Delhi must need approach those voters separately. A study of the names in electoral rolls in village areas makes interesting study—village names are corrupted or distorted words rather than the correct words found in a particular language. Some of the names are rather funny. To give examples of funny names, Halka (light), son of Bharat (heavy) or Tiji (sharp), wife of Buddhoo (dull), one how is borne on Budh (wednesday). As education spreads, reform in names will come automatically.[1] In other parts of India, reports reveal that, just to keep up promises people have torn their ballot papers into pieces and put a piece in the many different ballot boxes of different party candidates or at places people have thrust in the ballot boxes petitions to the Government for battering their lot and yet a some others places people have simply refused to vote because their beloved leader Pandit Nehru was not contesting from their constituency. Such things are natural in a place where for the first time the experiment is carried out."[2]

Mr. Sukmar Sen, Chief Election Commissioner, paid a compliment to the enthusiasm displayed by the Electorate and said it was a lesson to the politicians, themselves. In his opinion adult franchise* had proved a success. The nation can very well congratulate itself, on having graduated in the art of democratic elections on this vast scale. Quite contrary to this belief the well-known educationist. Dr. Amarnath Jha expressed to this belief the well-known educationist. Dr. Amarnath Jha expressed his view that universal adult suffrage in a country with 82 per cent of the populaion illiterate was a menace. He believed all men are no equal yet he thought all men should be given equal opportunity in life. He opined that the subtle task of law-making, and thereby governing the destiny of a nation should not be left at the mercy of the herd. According to him the task of legislation should be entrusted to those who were remarkable in life and not to all and sundry.

## APPENDIX (I)

### MEMBERS OF THE BHOPAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

| S. No. | Constituency | Name | Party | S. No. | Constituency | Name of the person | Name of party |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Shahjehanabad | Messers Jalauddin | Congress | 17. | Nasrulla Ganj | Messers Vanshi Dhar | Congress |
| 2. | Shish Mahal | Syed Ayjaz Uddin | Congress | 18. | Budhni | Lachmi Narain Agarwal | Congress |
| 3. | Jehangirabad | Inayatulla Khan | Congress | 19. | Goharganj (Resv.) | Dilip Singh (SC) | Independent |
| 4. | Bairagarh | Kumari Lila Rai | Congress | 20. | Goharganj | Gulab Chand | Independent |
| 5. | Bairagarh (Resv.) | Babulal (SC) | Congress | 21. | Raisen | Kamat Prasad | Congress |
| 6. | Huzoor | Sardar Mal Lalwani | Jan Sangh | 22. | Raisen (Resv.) | Babulal (SC) | |
| 7. | Berasia | Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma | Congress | 23. | Begum Ganj | Kundanlal | Congress |
| 8. | Nazirabad | Shankar Dayal Sharma | Hindu M. S. | 24. | Sultan Gunj | Babulal Kamal | Congress |
| 9. | Sehore | Sultan Mohd. Khan | Congress | 25. | Silwani | Lila Dhar Rathi | Congress |
| 10. | Sehore (Resv.) | Umrao Singh (SC) | Congress | 26. | Silwani (Resv.) | Raja Daulat Singh (SC) | Congress |
| 11. | Shyampur | Babulal | Congress | 27. | Amrabad | Nerbada Charanlal | Congress |
| 12. | Shyampur (Resv.) | Hari Kishan Singh (SC) | Congress | 28. | Baraily | Syam Sunder | Congress |
| 13. | Ichawar | Kesri Mal Jain | Independent | 29. | Udaipur | Shrinit Gopal | Congress |
| 14. | Ashta | Chandan Mal | Congress | 30. | Deori | Ram Karanlal | Congress |
| 15. | Ashta (Resv.) | Gopi Dass (SC) | Congress | | | | |
| 16. | Kotri | Maimoona Sulan | Congress | | | | |

**APPENDIX (2)**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

1. Shri Saidulla Khan Razmi (Congress) Sehore District

**Council of State**

Shri Bheron Prasad

**Party Strength in the State Assembly**

| | |
|---|---|
| Congress | 25 |
| Independent | 3 |
| Jan Sangh | 1 |
| Hindu Mahasabha | 1 |

**Leggislaive Assembly**

Speaker: Shri Sultan Mohammad Khan

Deputy Speaker:—Shri Laxmi Narain Agarwal

Leader of the House:—Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma

Deputy Leader of the House:—Maulana Inayatullah Khan Tarzi Mashriqui

Secretary Vidhan Sabha—Shri Madan Gopal

2. Pandit Chattur Narayan Malvia (Congress) Raisen district.

**Election Satistics:—**

Population 8,38107

(M: 438,78 F: 3,99,329)

Constituencies 23 (SM 16 DM 7)

Total Electorate: 419,976

Area 6,921 Sq. Miles

| | |
|---|---|
| Forfeited Deposits as detailed below: | 32 |
| Socialist | 1 |
| Jan Singh | 6 |
| Communist | 1 |
| *S. C. federation | 1 |
| Ram Rajya Parishad | 1 |
| Independents | 14 |
| **Total** | 32 |

(See India at a Glance page 580)

**Popular Ministry—An Assessment**

Shri Bhagwan Sahai I. C. S., the new Chief Commissioner took over charge from Shri V. Vishwsnahan I. C. S., on March 4. 1952. Thereafter Bhopal's first popular ministry headed by Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the leader of the House was sworn in on March 20, 1952. The new Chief Commissioner administered the oath a at simple ceremony at Lal Kothi, his official residence. Shri Shai remained in office up to December 19, 1954, and thereafter was sent to Nepal as an Indian ambassador and his place was filled in by Shri K. P. Bhargava, I. C. S. who worked as Chief Commissioner up to the time of the integration of the State with the new Madhya Pradesh on 1. 11. 1956.

In March, 1952, the popular ministry took charge of the administration of Bhopal. With the advent of the popular regime, a new era of all-round development began. This included such schemes as community project, development of backward classes and others which transformed the whole structure of Bhopal and gave it a new shape.

In 1953 the Bhopal Jagirdari Abolition Bill was successfully piloted through the newly elected legislature of Bhopal. The Committee formed for this purpose recommended payment of compensation to hereditary Jagirs in one lump sum of sliding scale and to those holding life tenure Jagirs in cash payments during their life time.

Agriculture Income-Tax Bill was also introduced in the same year and it was calculated to yield an income of about Rs. 1,75,000. Further with a view to help industrial expansion, a new 2.50, K. W. power house was installed. I order to attract capital for new industries, some concessions were announced by the Ministry. Bhopal has abundant resources of ceramic cement and glass industries for which pioneers are still needed. The Government of India, however, decided to locate Rs. 25 crore Heavy Electricals equipment factory in Bhopal.

## UNEMPLOYMENT

A Census of the unemployment was conducted by the Government.* It was also proposed to create fresh avenues of earning a livelihood

to combat unemployment. The personnel thus recruited was intended to be employed in reclamation of land, construction of bunds, roads and other development activities. The urban employment relief plan included the following measures:—

(1) Opening of training-cum-production centres. (2) Opening of polytechnic. (3) Increased aid to industries.

The Bhopal Second Five Year Plan costing Rs 36 crores, envisaged the giving of direct employment to about 80,000 people.

His highness of Bhopal, in the meanwhile offered to give Rs 1 lakh for distribution as interest-free secured loans to the poor and unemployed, but there were differences of opinion between Shri Kamta Prasad (then finance Minister) and Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma. The Chief Minister of Bhopal, about the advisability of accepting the offer. The latter was not in favour of getting obliged to the Nawab on an issue like this. Thereafter, the portfolio of labour and unemployment was taken over by the Prime Minister from the former.

## WATER ARRANGEMENT

In the 1953, the Central Government also approved two major project's scheme—(1) Kolkar River Project and (2) Barna River Project the first was to cast Rs four and half crores and on complication would irrigate nearly one lakh acres of land and produce about 1700 KWs of electricity while the second one was estimated to cost Rs 3-1/2 crores, and would irrigate one an a half lakh acres.

With the completion of the four lakhs Narhari Project in Gorakhpur Village (Bhopal irrigation facilities have been extended to an area of 2000 acres of land covering a dozen villages of the State). A thirty feet high and one-and-a half mile long dam was built to divert the waters of the Narhari river for irrigation in the surrounding villages. The dam has a capacity to preserve 140 million cubic feet of water.

Half of the 500-feet long Palakmati Dam in Goharganj Tehsil was sunk overnight and exposed a dozen villages to the danger of floods. The dam was, however, repaired by the Public Works

Department at a cost of Rs 15,948. This dam was constructed in 1937 at a cost of nearly Rs 3 lakhs and irrigates an area of about 3000 acres of land.

There were 400 villages without wells or other sources of water supply. With the construction of a large number of new wells. repairs of old ones and completion of tanks and dams, the scarcity of water was brought under control.

**Rehabilitation of Refugees**

At Sultanpur (Bhopal) Government of India developed a Central Mechanised Farm for resettling 1,000 landless labourers drawn from different par of the country. A township at Bairagarh, costing about 40 lakhs was also constructed. Loans, lands and shops were given to displaced persons.

**Housing**

Government of Bhopal also implemented a scheme for the construction of an industrial colony involving an expenditure of Rs 16 lakhs. About 500 two-room tenements each costing. Rs. 3000 were built. Low-Income Housing scheme was also implemented for the benefit of the middle and lower income-group people in urban areas.

**Public Health Activities**

With the advent of the responsible government and with liberal allotment under the Five Year Plan, public health activities in Bhopal exceeded the total achievements of the last 50 years. Apart from B. C. G campaign, one of the landmarks in the extension of medical facilities was the establishment of the 125-bed T. B. Hospital built at the commanding site of Idgah hills. There was a plan provision of Rs 8 lakhs under the Second Five Year Plan for construction of additional wards of 40 beds each at the existing T. B. Hospital.

Cost of comstruction of these wards was met by Central Railway Administration, Ministry of Rehabilitation (Govt. of India and donation of Rs 80,00) received from Shri Bhiwandiwala of Sehore.

**Prohibition**

Govt. stopped issuing licences for opening new liquor shops in the State with a view to discourage consumption of liquor. Moreover, there was compulsory closing of liquor shops in factory areas on pay days.

**Bhoodan Yojana**

This movement was started with effect from 17.7.53 in Bhopal. Against the target of 8,000 acres about 1000 acres of land was collected up to 1953. Shri Shankar Rao Deo, a disciple of Shri Vinoba Bhava came over to Bhopal for this purpose. Shri Kamta Prasad (Finance Minister, Bhopal) while donating 30 acres of land urged that the movement should be kept aloof from polities and the work be taken up in a spirit of comradeship, cruising zeal and national emergency. Shri Babu Lal Agarwal (Proprietor Textile Mills) Chalisgaon) donated 1200 acres of land and His Highness the ruler of Bhopal, 2000 acres.

Dilating upon the Bhoodan Yajana, Shri Deo said that the idea emerged spontaneously out of Telangana where violence playing its wanton role of desturction. During his tour acharya Vinova Bhave found out that distribution of lan was the burning problem before the country.

**Education**

By far the greatest development was made in the field of education. The Government of Bhopal decided to nationalise the publication of text books prescribed in the syllabus up to the middle standard in order to check deterioration in the standard and to effect economy of prices.

Against only 264 primary schools which the State had in the year 1951, Bhopal had in 1956 some 1,400 primary schools. Of these as many as 93 were basic schools and 84 middle schools. Colleges opened were:—

(1) Teachers Training Schools at Bhopal, Sehore, and Raisen

(2) Post Graduate Basic Training College in Bhopal.

(3) Junta College at Sanchi.

(4) Agricultural college and Arts college at Sehore.

(5) Gandhi Medical College at Bhopal.

It was decided to give compulsory education for all below 14. The Central Library of Bhopal was also reorganised and it soon came to possess 23,000 books. Thus phenomenal progress was witnessed in the popular regime.

**Part 'C' States Common Problems**

It was learnt from papers that as result of the Chief Minister's conferences, the State Legislatures in Part "C" states including Bhopal would soon be vested with additional powers. Their demands related largely to the jurisdiction of High Courts, establishment of Universities and recruitment to the Civil Service, greater control over state budgets. On December 15, 1953, the Home Minister, Dr K. N. Katju introduced in the House of the People, the Government of Part "C" States (amendment) Bill seeking to vest greater financial powers in the Legislatures of Part 'C' State from the Government of India or the Chief Commissioner in relation to any matter with respect to which the Legislative Assembly of that state has power to make laws and all grants made and all loans advanced to that State in repayment of loans will form one consolidated fund of the State. Reports by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India relating to accounts of the State would be submitted of the Chief Commissioner who would lay them before the Legislative Assembly.[3]

For the reorganisation of Part 'C' States the sub-Committee appointed by the Congress Parliamentary Party. It submitted its proposals in December 1953. They recommended that Vindhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh may be kept as separate states since they are more or less viable. As regards Bhopal, Ajmer and Coorg, these being more or less units in the midst of larger states, they may be merged or kept separate with some areas added to them.[4]

**Merger of States**

The States Reorganisation Committee Report recommended inclusion of Hindi-speaking parts of Madhya Pradesh, the whole of

Madhya Bharat and Vindhya Pradesh and Bhopal in a single unit. The three regions varied in economic resources but the reconstituted State was better balanced between agrioulture and industry as regards future development. Bhopal was regarded as more suitable for capital than Jabalpur by the Committee of experts appointed to decide the issue of capital. Bhopal has lost its age-old separate identity with effect from November 1, 1956, but it still continues to make economic, cultural, and intellectual contribution to the progress of the new State, of which it has the glory of being its capital Bhopal, being the headquarter of the new administration, has also the privilege of being the focus where people from diverse corners of the State come and live together, thus paving the way for the much desired emotional integration of the new State.

**Life-Sketch of Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma—Chief Minister Bhopal.**

Dr. S. D. Sharma is a scholar politician who had been called to head a three-men Ministry in Bhopal on March 20, 1952. Born in August 1918, Dr. Sharma then enjoyed the reputation of being in the youngest Chief Minister in India.

Dr. Sharma may well boast of an academic record which is a veritable catalogue of multiple brilliance. He is a triple M. A. in English, Hindi and Sanskrit, Master of Laws and a Bar-at-Law, D. P. A., London, F. R. S, London, and Ph. D. Cambridge University, where he got exemption from viva on the basis of the excellence of his thesis 'Interpretation of Legislative Powers in Federal Constitution' and thus acquired the distinction of being the only Indian to earn this honour. A major distinction awaited Dr. Sharma when he was awarded the Brandeis fellowship of the Harvard Law School U. S. A., and that of the Academy of International Law at the Hague, Holland. A further distinction made Dr. Sharma stand in good stead among the countrymen when he was appointed a lecturer, Law Faculty, Cambridge University. In India, Dr. Sharma, before he took over as Chief Minister, served as Reader in Law for nine years in the University of Lucknow.

During his student days, Dr. Sharma earned a name in sports, too. A good athlete, a cross-country runner and a champion

swimmer, sum up his qualities as a sportsman-journalist and social worker. He was a student leader in the hectic days of 1942. After his return to India in 1948, he organised a movement for the merger of the State with the Indian Union and courted imprisonment at the first satyagraha. Following an agreement between the Government of India and H. H. the Nawab of Bhopal when the State was taken over by the Central Government, Dr. Sharma was released and unanimously elected President of the District Congress Committee. He was also elected by a unanimous vote as President of the Anti-Communal front. During his tenure of office as Chief Minister, an era of unparrelled progress and development dawned on all the spheres of life. The first success that attended him as Chief Minister was when he obtained the mandate from all sections of the State Legislative Assembly to abolish the Jagirdari System in Bhopal. Before the enactment was actually enforced more that half of the Jagirdars had voluntarily offered to terminate their respective Jagirs against payment of cash annuity. As an educationist, Dr Sharma had important contributions to make in the field of education. He made education free in the State for Harijan, Adivasis and other backward classes as well as for girl students. In the final year under his regime, he also succeeded in enforcing compulsory Primary Education Act in the State. Under him, the budget of the State Education Department rase to a figure which represented three-fourth of the total budget of the State under princely regime. Of more recent importance were has efforts for the establishment of a Medical College and the Rs 80-Crores Project with regard to the manufacture of Heavy Electrical Machinery at Bhopal. The present importance of Bhopal as the capital city of new Madhya Pradesh owes not a little to his untiring efforts and zeal.

In the general elections of 1957, Dr Sharma was elected the single-member Udaipura constituency and was appointed Minister in Charge of Education and Law Departments.

He was leader of the Indian Delegation of Asian Member State on Primary and Compulsory Education, UNESCO, held at Karachi from 28 the December 1959 to the January 1960.

Dr. Sharma was re-elected in the recent general elections and was sworn in as a Minister in the new Cabinet on March 12, 1962.

He was assigned department of Education and Law. Later, he was made in-charge of P. W. D. and Law Departments. He continued as a Minister in the new Cabinet (of Madhya Pradesh) sworn in on September 30, 1963 and has been entrusted with the porfolio of Education and Languages. In connection with the reshuffle of porlfolios, Dr. Sharma was given the Department of Commerce and Industries and Shri Narsingh Rao. Dixit was made Education Minister on Dec. 1, 1964.

In the month of August 1967, the ruling party was thrown out of power and Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma had to vacate the post of ministership. He has been known or integrity and efficiency and administration abilty and scholarly pursuits.

## REFERENCES


1. Gleaning from polling station, by Principal P. C. Malhotra Govt. Hamidia College Magazine August 1952 pp 8-12.
2. Indian Review, April 1952, p. 162.

* Article 326 of the Constitution lays down that elections to the House of the People and the Legislative Assembly of every State shall be on the basis of adult suffrage that it to say every person who is a citizen of India and who is not less than 21 years and who is of sound mind and not corrupt shall be entitled to be registered as a voter at any such election.
* The total of 2087 people in the population of 1,30,000 were found unemployed in the Bhopal city itself.

3. Free Press Journal dated 17.12.1953.
4. Times of India, dated 21 12. 1953.

# 10

# Bhopal

The Bhopal region is hallowed by historical memories dating back to the reign of Chandra Gupta-II (A. D. 375-414). The inscriptions at the Udaigir caves in Vidisha and the Sanchi record of Amrakar Deo (A. D. 401-402 and 412-413) speak of the whole of the Malwa region including the areas covered by modern Sehore which formed a segment of the empire of Chandra Gupta II. Later, Harsha (A. D. 606-47) ruled over vast territories that extended from the Himalayas to the Narmada region encompassing the Bhopal region as well.

Later, during the reign of Bhoj Parmar (A. D. 1010-55), Bhopal seems to have derived its name from the dam built on the upper lake by a minister of Bhoj. Bhopal, which means dam built by "Raja Bhoj", must have been the site of a growing township and the present name Bhopal must have been its corrupt form. The legend says:

> Once Raja Bhoj was afflicted with an incurable disease. A sage advised him to excavate a lake fed by 365 springs, and to take a daily dip in its waters. The most suitable place for this purpose was at the headwaters of the river Betwa, 32 Kilometres from the city of Bhopal. The place was surrounded by a ring of hills with two small breaches. These gaps were filled up with two enormous dams by his engineers which attract attention even today as a specimen of hydraulic engineering skill. It is said, in all 359 streams were available at that spot and for the remaining streams, one Kalika Gond pointed out another stream which was fed by six hill springs. The water of these springs was diverted to the Bhojpur lake, which in those days was the largest and the most beautiful lake in India.[1]

The great Shaiva temple with its magnificent dome at Bhojpur, about 30 km from Bhopal, was the creation of King Bhoj. Legend

ascribed to him periodical worship at this temple which he used to visit navigating the lakes.

In the twelfth century, the Parmar dynasty, carrying the title of Mahakumars, ruled over the Bhopal region. An inscription of a grant his recently been discovered near Bhopal which associates this region with the dynasty.[2] Udaya Varman, son of Harish Chandra, ruled here; his plates inscribing grants dated Vikram era 1256 (A. D. 1199) have been found. The inscription relates an important event when the king took a dip in the Narmada river (near Hoshangabad) before granting the Ganaura village (probably Ganaura of the Sehore district) to a Brahmin. It has been identified as the place where Ginnaurgarh fort stands today.[3] The fort was the Gond stronghold and subsequently fell to the founder of the Nawab dynasty of Bhopal, Dost Mohammed Khan, in the eighteenth century.

It may be safely conjectured that Bhopal was a principality even in the time of Sher Shah (1539-45). Sir H. Elliot writes:

> In Sewas Sikander Khan Miana held sway and Mahesan was Raja of Bhopal. These rulers of Malwa wrote in reply that when Shershah's army came to those parts they would not fail to assist and serve him.[4]

There have been some divergent approaches to the history of the funding of the Bhopal State. It is customary to paint the founder of Bhopal, Dost Mohammed Khan, as an adventurer, but the accounts show that he was an intrepid fighter, and a man full of guile. He was born in a local tribe in Afghanistan; he later emigrated to Hindustan, settled in Lohari Jalabad in the former North-West Frontier Province. He was stated to have quarrelled with and slain a Pathan there, and when being brought to justice he fled and took shelter in Delhi. During the first years of Bahadur Shah (1708). He subsequently jointed the Moghul army in its march into Malwa.

The political situation in northern and central India at the time was one of disorder verging on anarchy. Highwaymen, robbers, and plunderers used to issue from Malwa ravaging the territories from the border of Berar to Khandesh. They devastated Berasia which was held by Taj Mohammed Khan, a noble of the Moghul court. The authorities were unable to check this lawlessness. Dost Mohammed Khan took advantage of the situation, and under advice of Mohammed Sala, Sunder Rai, and Alam Chand Kanoongo took

lease of Berasia for thirty thousand rupees a year from Taj Mohammed Khan and thus laid the foundation of his power. Now, Dost Mohammed Khan began to give shape to his ambitions and induced the Pathans of his clan from Afghanistan to come over to Berasia and settle down there. With this formidable nucleus of relations and clansmen. Dost Mohammed Khan began to plan a gradual subjugation the neighbouring territories and kingdoms.

A master of strategem and guile, Dost Mohammed Khan set about conquering the adjoining territories such as Parasan, Jagdishpur, Khichiwara, and Umatwara. He launched upon a scheme of espionage from within and attack from without. When the chief of Parasan was busy with Holi rivalries, Dost Mohammed Khan sent a spy to report on the situation. Dost Mohammed Khan struck in the dead of night, and swooped upon the followers of the chief, who were enjoying a dance performance under Holi introxicants. They were taken unawares, and a great number including women and children were slain and their property looted. This victory emboldened Dost Mohammed Khan and his Pathan followers to extend the conquests to other areas. He saw the value of cunning applied to minor warfare with not-too-significant powers. But with the breakdown of the Mughal empire, the principalities in Malwa which had broken up in fragmentary powers could be pounced upon and seized by methods such as those used by Dost Mohammed Khan.

In the wider historical context Dost Mohammed Khan's relations with the Nizam began in a low key. William Irvine writes:

> Nizam-ud-Mulk now turned back to Malwa where he had an old score to settle with Dost Mohammed Khan. Some years before (1720) this man had joined the force under Syed Dilawar Ali Khan sent by Sayyid Brothers to arrest Nizam-ul-Mulk. He had escaped in safety from the field where so many were slain; but the time had now come to wreak vengeance on him. By 23rd March, 1723 the Wazir was again in Malwa, and a force was despatched against Dost Mohammed Khan who had taken refuge in his fort of Bhopalgarh where some fighting between the two sides occurred. Finally, it was reported to the court on 24 May 1723 that he small fort of Islamgarh had been taken. Yar Mohammed Khan had been sent in by his father to plead excuses and make due submissions; Nizam-ul-Mulk was satisfied by these overtures, and terms arranged.[5]

Dost Mohammed died in 1726 at the age of 66.[6] On his death the court of Bhopal installed as ruler his younger son, Sultan Mohammed Khan, on the plea that the elder son was sent to Hyderabad with the Nizam and therefore no available. But the Nizam, in order to assert his superiority, sent his hostage Yar Mohammed Khan to Bhopal to be appointed as the rightful ruler. The younger brother, Sultan Mohammed Khan, who was only a child of 7 or 8, could not himself govern; Yar Mohamemd Khan, on the other hand, was a young man of 18 or 20 years. So, when Yar Mohammed Khan arrived at Bhopal, the court put forward the plea that he was an illegitimate son of Dost Mohammed Khan. Armed with this objection they denied him the right to call himself Nawab and Prince. However, being the elder son of Dost Mohammed Khan he was allowed to exercise the royal functions and powers.

Yar Mohammed Khan became a helpless protege of the Nizam. The court of Bhopal became subservient to the Nizam, whose writ ran in these principalities because Yar Mohammed Khan could not but play the second fiddle to him.

The Nizam thus added another pawn on his political chessboard. He created for himself a strong base in Bhopal. He was summoned at Delhi and entrusted with the mission of fighting the Marathas. He was given a large equipment and a crore of rupees. Thus fortified, the Nizam passed through Dhamani Sironj and reached Bhopal by the middle of December 1737[7] with an army of over seventy thousand troops. He encamped on the bank of the upper lake. Baji Rao I accept the Nizam's challenge and with the Maratha forces crossed the Narmada with a view to dislodging the Nizam and his troops.

Baji Rao fully exploited the situation. He adopted the tactics of guerilla fighting and his troops harassed the Mughal forces to the point of desperation. The Nizam had to retreat and find shelter in the fortified city of Bhopal. Baji Rao seized the opportunity. He encircled Bhopal and cut off all supplies to the Nizam. The Emperor also was helpless. A week's blockade reduced the Mughals to a pitiable condition. They nearly starved and so did their horses of war; even *juar* was sold at one rupee a *seer*. The horses and camels were reduced to living on bark of trees and on water-reeds. Baji Rao

had firmly laid the blockade and was camping at a site six miles from Bhopal. The exchange of fire between the two hostile camps continued till evening. Here was a big dilemma for the Nizam. He could not come out openly to engage in a battle nor could be escape. He had to accept defeat at the hands of the Marathas and a peace treaty was signed at Doraha Sarai, 64 miles from Dhamani Sironj, on 7 January 1738.[8]

In A. D. 1745, the Marathas again intruded into Bhopal territory, as representatives of the Moghul court of Delhi, demanding tribute from the Nawab of Bhopal. As a result, Bhilsa, Shujalpur, Ashta, Sehore, Lochawar,and Doraha Sarai were ceded to the Marathas. The Bhopal ruler[9] was humbled considerably. To make up for the loss he played, in the strain of his ancestor Dost Mohammed Khan, a trick on the Governor of the Raisen fort who owed his appointment to Delhi. The Governor was attacked and killed, but it was reported to the Emperor in Delhi that the Governor was rebellious and disloyal to the Mughal Emperor and therefore was killed for his treason. The Emperor was highly pleased with the Nawab of Bhopal for the service thus rendered and thanked him, granting him the Raisen fort.

From 1771 to 1777 Bhopal enjoyed an orderly government. In the court of Bhopal there began a line of brilliant administrators, the foremost among whom was the Diwan, Vijai Ram. After his death there was some trouble. His son, Ghasi Ram,who succeeded him, prohibited slaughter of cows in the Bhopal kingdom and also adopted a hard line towards the Pathans. These factors caused resentment among the Pathans and they killed him.

Another instance in which the Pathans satisfied their lust for blood was when they killed Lala Kaseri, an able Diwan after Ghasi Ram, because they suspected that his son, Munne Lal, was having an affair with a Pathan woman.

The History of Bhopal administration after this brief interlude of competent rule shows internal dissensions among the rulers. However, constructive efforts were put in a big way by some of the later administrators and Diwans. Four of the boys adopted by Nawab Hayat Mohammed Khan (A. D. 1778) were the children respectively

of two Brahmins, a Gond and an Ahir.[40] They were converted to Islam. They proved themselves as able administrators and served Bhopal with great skill.

In November 1778, we come across a very important historical even. During the tenure of office of Faiz Khan, Colonel Goddrd had launched a great march of the East India Company forces via Bhopal to Bombay in a bid to help the Bombay chapter of the Company in its struggle against the Marathas. Colonal Goddard left Rajaghat on 11 October 1778. He intended to proceed the next day to Golgunj on the road to Saugar and to reach the Narmada river in a short time. Moving south of Chhatarpur he reached the boundary Bundelkhand. He took the road leading to the Hoshangabad ghats. He reached Bhopal on 20 November 1778. He stayed in the city for a few days. The Nawab of Bhopal and his ministers greeted him and treated his troops with great care. It was here at Bhopal that Colonel Goddard not only gave the much-needed rest to his troops but also replenished his provisions which had suffered great depletion.

In placating the rising East India Company's power the Nawab of Bhopal had understandable motives. He was faced with a win danger: one from the Marathas and the other from the Pindaris. With the latter he had a strange relationship. Sometimes he used them as a marauding force. But it was a double-edged sword. The Pindaris would a times turn against him as they were no under his control. The East India Company had a settled policy with regard to the Pindaris—they had decided to root out this lawless force. The Nawab took a common enough course; he aligned himself with the East India Company who were hostile to the Marathas and were a determined foe of the Pindaris. In forging this link with the East India Company, the Nawab in fact was preparing to shackle his own power. The latter events down the following two centuries saw the Nawabs of Bhopal sliding inevitably into the imperialist den. The logic of the situation impelled the Nawabs to asunder themselves from the base of the people over whom they held sway. They sought to perpetuate this sway by the unpatriotic act of being the cat's-paw of a foreign power in India. So when the independence of India came, the last Nawab refused to face the reality. A people's rising compelled him to abdicate.

It is worth nothing that some members of the Nawab's family were in secret league with the Marathas. One of them was Ghaus Mohammd Khan, who invited the armies of the Scindia and Bhosale to occupy Bhopal as he was jealous of the power and glory of the ruling Nawab. The Nawab, Wazir Mohammed, now looked for a firm alliance which would keep him safe from the marauding Pindaries and the Marathas. In 1812, he Maratha chiefs, Scindia and Bhosale entered into an alliance to destroy Wazir Mohammed. They even launched an attack on him towards the close of 1813. But it brought no substantial gain to the alliance. Alarmed at the Maratha onslaughts, Wazir Mohammed turned to the East India Company for help. The Company looked about for a firm ally against the Pindaries who were their chief source of trouble. The East India Company no longer relied upon the support of the Marathas against the Pindaris, and readily accepted the offer of the Nawab of Bhopal.

Wazir Mohammed died in 1816 and was succeeded by his son, Nazir Mohammed, who was married to Qudsia Begum, the daughter of Ghaus Mohammed who had risen in revolt against Wazir Mohammed.

Qudsi Begum later dominated the scene of action as a ruling princess and subsequently as a Regent and became the cause of much suspicion to the British government, especially far her role during the Great Revolt of 1857. Nazir Mohammed entered into a treaty with the East Indian Company in 1818. The treaty called the Treaty of Raisen,[11] contained three significant articles.

Articles I and II affirm the resolve of the East India Company and the Nawab of Bhopal to enter into and perpetuate a treaty of mutual friendship. Article III reads:

> The Nawab of Bhopal and his heirs and successors will act in subordinate co-operation with the British Government and acknowledge its supremacy and will not have any connection with other Chiefs and States.

Article V provides for interference in the external affairs of Bhopal. It says:

> The Nawab and his heirs and successors will not commit aggression on anyone. If any dispute a raise by accident with anyone it shall be submitted to the arbitration and award of the British Government.

Besides, the other provisions of the treaty compelled the Nawab of Bhopal to raise and provide for a contingent of 600 horses and 400 infantry the expenses for which were to be met from the Bhopal exchequer. On return, the East India Company made an award of some districts to the Nawab. It was expected that he would use the revenue to maintain the contingent. However, Aitchson's Compilation speaks of the grant of rupees six thousand a year, on their revenues which provision was guaranteed by the British government in 1818.

Nawab Nazir Mohammed, the signatory to the celebrated treaty, died shortly thereafter, leaving a daughter, Sikander Jahan Begum, who was married to Jahangir Mohammed Khan in April 1835. Between the death of her husband and the marriage of her daughter to Jahangir Mohammed Khan, Qudsia Begum exercised all the powers of ruler as Regent. Eventually, as will be evident, she was obliged to surrender power to her son-in-law which she was evading all the time.

In 1836, Nawab Jahangir Mohammd Khan rose in rebellion against Qudsia Begum. Although at first defeated, he took shelter behind the walls of the Ashta fort.[12] Qudsia Begum laid siege to the fort for some months, but without success. Then again the East India Company stepped in as a mediator, and an agreement was signed in 1837 by which the charge of administration was left in the hands of the Nawab and Qudsia Begum received a life *jagir* of five lakh rupees a year.[13]

The Nawab also effected a reconcilation with his wife, Sikanda Jahan Begum, but it did not work. Sikandar Jahan Begum retired to live with her mother, Qudsia Begum, at Islamnagar.

After the death of Nawab Jahangir Mohammed Khan, his daughter, Shahjahan Begum, was proclaimed as the rightful heir. During the minority of Shahjahan Begum, Sikandar Begum acted as Regent up to February 1847.

As Regent, Sikandar Jahan Begum opened a new chapter of administrative reforms and progress for Bhopal. She abolished the system of farming out revenue and established direct settlement with heads of village. She abolished also monopoly of trade, reorganised the police, and liquidate the debts of the State.

The Bhopal contingent, first raised under the Treaty of Raisen, was reorganised in 1840 and its maintenance cost was increased from 100,000 to 138,000 rupees. In 1845, the cost was rupees two lakhs. A supplementary article was added to the Treaty of Raisen the following year. It laid down that Bhopal was under in liability to spend two lakh rupees annually over the maintenance of the contingent.

The Bhopal contingent was to be the military token of an alliance of the British government because Article VI of the Treaty of Raisen clearly laid down that the contingent was meant for the services of the British government "whenever require; and whenever necessary, the whole of the Bhopal force shall join the British army excepting such a portion as may be required in the internal administration of the country". However, the Bhopal contingent mutinied during the Great Revolt of 1857 against the British forces. Even while the contingent revolted, the Nawab stood by the British with unflinching loyalty. Here again, one comes up against an irritant of Bhopal's history: the contingent drawn from a cross-section of the people, both Hindus and Muslims, revolted against the imperialist forces in India, but the Nawab, symbolising feudalism, supported the British.

## REFERENCES

1. V. N. Aiyer *A Historical Sketch of Central Provinces and Bera.*
2. Bhopal State Gazeetteer "1974" (unpublished MS).
3. *Malcolm's Memories of Central India.*
4. *History of India,* H Elliot Vol. IV, 378.
5. *The Later Mughals* Vol. II, pp. 130 or 31.
6. *Bhopal Sate Gaztteer* Luard (ed), 1908, p. 12.
7. G. S. Sardesai, *A New History of the Maratha,* Vol. II, p. 156.
8. Grant Duff, *History of the Marathas,* Vol. I, p. 455.
9. Nawab Faiz Mohammd Khan (A. D. 1742-77) at the time being minor, the affairs of the State were conducted by his step-mother, Mamola Sahiba.
10. *Malcolm's memoirs of central India* Vol. I, pp. 296-97.
11. Aitchson, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads.,* Vol. IV.
12. Bhopal State Gazetteer, 1908.
13. *Ibid.,* p. 29.

# 11

# The Great Revolt and After

SIKANDAR JAHAN BEGUM, matching in looks an amazon, in ability Chankya, and in affability one's aunt, had to take up cudgles against forces of sabotage which threatened her from inside of her own territory. She was wary of encirclement by the forces inimical to Bhopal and planned to cope with their threat.

The Great Revolt of 1857 spread in central India. It began at Neemuch on 3 June, 1857. Within a week it spread to Gwalior and soon after to Indore and Mhow by the beginning of July 1857. Because of the territorial proximity the flames of the Revolt began to threaten Bhopal. Sikandar Jahan Begum took effective steps against its possible influence on her State. She issued instructions to her troops to stand firm in their loyalty to the State and not a revolt against the British troops. She was as loyal to the British Government now in the hour of its great trial as before.

The internal enemies were her own kith and kin, the external ones were the Pindaris who joined the 'Mutineers', the Bhopal contingent, the rebel officers of her own army, the Wilaitis, and to them was added the general disenchantment with the rule of the East India Company. The Begum, in order to help the British troops, raised huge amounts of loans from bankers. She put her economy in order and made every possible effort to help the British troops.

Within the city of Bhopal the unrest had spread already, the Englishmen were hated and threatened. The Maulvis and the Afghan mercenaries started to preach 'jehad' against the British government.[1] It was reported that they used to gather in the mosque

of Mankashah and Madar Ali-Mahm. Hatred against the English was so whipped up that even grass-cutters and coolies were reluctant to serve the English families. The Begum arranged such a fine system of espionage that she could get detailed reports of every event in the State. The Bhopai contingent had its headquarters at Sehore, the district headquarters. It troops mutinied soon after the return of its three companies of infantry which had taken part in the Great Revolt at Indore.[2] No sooner had the mutiny spread among the troops than the English officers began to flee from Sehore. The Political Agent (the Agent to the Governor-General), stationed at Sehore, and other important officers of the British government thought it fit to leave Bhopal and take refuge in the British territory of Hoshangabad.

While migrating from Sehore to Hoshangabad the British received full protection of the Begum who provided them with all facilities to transport their goods, and for their personal protection she sent sawars, elephants, and bullockcarts. This act of the Begum was reminiscent of the help and charity shown by the Nawab of Bhopal to Colonel Goddard when the latter marched through the Nawab's territory in 1778. The consistently helpful attitude of the Nawab and his descendant, the Begum, evoked a great measure of admiration from the British government.

While the flames of the Great Revolt enveloped the surrounding areas, the towns of Bhopal and Sehore were also affected. Jagirdars, including Wazris Mohammed Khan, who was an active supporter of the mutineer's army, were sought to be suppressed by the Begum. Here in Bhopal the panic was so great that even the city *kotwal,* Ram Baksh deserted his post and fled. This brought about more demoralisation in the administration. In the meanwhile, rumour spread that the sugar sold in the market contained particles of bones of cows and pigs. This rumour further aggravated the situation and the flame of mutiny rose wild and high. The city *kotwal* of Sehore was so scared that he hid himself in the house of the Vakil of the State. It was only when the commander of the Bhopal army came for his protection that he brought about some control of the situation, but not in full.

The Begum ordered the examination of the Sugar, and found the allegation to be true.[3] As soon as it was known that the sugar was purposively polluted by the British in order to injure their

religious feelings, the people plunged into a spree of loot and arson. To save face, the Begum ordered that the bone sugar be used as fodder for elephants horses belonging to her daughter, Shahjahan Begum, who was then a minor. So, after all, the hated mixture was not all a waste.

The Bhopal contingent comprising 600 cavalry and 400 infantry had earlier been despatched to Indore on 7 July 1857, to quell the revolting troops at Mhow. Some of them go back to Sehore, defying the orders of the British officers. They were animated by a strong spirit of revolt, the frenzy almost driving them to thoughts and acts of arson, loot, and killing of the British men and women. They even broke into the magazine for plundering arms and ammunition.

The Maulvi in Delhi had enjoined on all Muslims and Hindus to rally round the lst Mughal Emperor and to destroy the British power. The first shot in Bhopal to herald the Great Revolt, which had begun in Central India at Neemuch on 3 June 1857, was fired by two officers of the Bhopal contingent, Risaldar Wali Shah and Havaldar-Mahavir Kotha—representing, as is were, the Muslim and Hindu sentiment roused in a volley of charges against the English. They planted two flags of the Revolt in Bhopal: Nishan-e-Mohammedi and Nishan-e-Mahaviri.[4] This memorable and highly symbolic event took place on 6 August 1857. A people's revolt was brewing. Bhopal was stirred to its depth; only its ruler was cold and calculating.

On 5 September 1857, Sikandar Jahan Begum received reports about the arrival of a letter from the army at Mhow to the Bhopal contingent asking the contingent to be ready to accompany it to Delhi;[5] the contingent replied that it would be ready to march to Delhi only by the end of the rainy season after they had settled their accounts.

The Begum did not panic. She caused in inquiry to be made and subsequently dismissed 59 active mutineers of the contingent. She got a *parwana* issued on 13 September 1857 that resignation should be obtained from every mutineering sepoy of the contingent, and decreed that such ones should not be allowed to settle in Bhopal or in Sehore cantonment.[6]

Meanwhile the flames and fumes of the Great Revolt filled the skyline of Bhopal. The Begum had already heard that the mutiny was turning into a people's revolt.[7] The legendary "five loaves" began to arrive in villages and towns of the State, passing from person to person high and low, the message of a nascent nationalism which had one single target-the end of the rule of the East India Company. The Political Agent at Sehore asked the Begum to be vigilant. The loaves mission was started by the Balahi of the Sherpur village. The Begum promptly ordered all District Collectors to cause such incidents to be reported to the nearest Thana and to 'nip the mischief in the bud'.

Earlier, the Pindaris, to whom the Nawabs had shown ambivalent attitude to alienation and befriending, soon turned the situation to account. On 14 July 1857, Shajat Khan and his followers attacked Berasia and indulged in widespread loot and arson. The toll took the life of Subba Rao, the Assistant Political Agent. They plundered the Berasia treasury. To their good luck, the Bhopal contingent army at Berasia joined hands with them.

The greasy cartridges had detonated the grenade of what began as the 'Sepoy Mutiny' at Meerut. In Bhopal, the miracle took another shape and hue. It was widely believed that the English, in order to wound the religious susceptibilities of the inhabitants of Hindustan, had got gone particles of pigs and cows mixed in sugar.

Bhawani Prasad, the Sate *Vakil,* informed the Begum of a highly volatile situation caused by the repeated attempts of the rebels to set fire to the bungalows of the English, their actual plundering of Sehore, and of leaving a rail of utter confusion and racial bitterness.[8] He communicated also his fears to the ruler of the conversation between Arif Shah and the Bakshi about the high salaries offered by the Emperor in Delhi to his officers. There were persistent rumours that the rule of the Emperor in Delhi was acknowledged by the States of Gwalior, Indore, and Tonk. All this the people of Bhopal felt was in strange contrast to the Begum's loyalty to the firanghee—was she going to be a convert to Christianity and follow the religion of *gora-loag,* they cynically remarked.

As the clouds of distrust casting ominous shadows gathered in the post-monsoon skies of Bhopal, and the Begum sat brooding but unmoved, she heard of a major defection from her army. Risaldar Mohammed Ali Khan of the 3rd Risala deserted the army on the ostensible plea of taking up job with the Raja of Bhanpur.[9] The Begum saw through the designs of Mohammed Ali Khan and, after persuasions had failed, ordered his arrest. The *parwana* of the arrest was printed at the Sikandari Press, Bhopal, and in all 160 copies were taken out.[10] The Begum asked her Vakil to inform the Governor-General through the Political Agent that a Major from the army, ex-Risaldar Mohammed Ali Khan, had been ordered to be arrested.

The network of espionage devised by the Begum worked well. On 9 December 1857, Bhikaji Halkara reported:

> I arrived incognito near the home of Mohammed Ali Khan, ex-Risaldar, and I saw an assembly of 12 Wilaiti (Afghans) in the latter's house and also saw his preparation for his onward journey. I have learnt from one of the Wilaiis that the ex-Risaldar intended to leave for Delhi on Saturday.
>
> I have in the past 4 days observed 15 or 16 Wilaitis coming to Mohammed Ali Khan ex-Risaldar's home in Jehangirabad who has made preparations for the journey and is waiting for conveyance.[11]

Fakhir Ali Din joined Mohammed Ali Khan together with the Wilaitis who had taken shelter in Mohammed Ali Khan's house. He then escaped to Bhanpur and participated in a raid on the English forces at the Rahagarh fort along with the Bundelas. Meanwhile the news arrived that Mohammed Ali Khan visited Sironj where he stayed for four days. A more important news was that Tantia Tope at this time was camping at a place about 26 miles from Sironj. There is no direct evidence that the ex-Risaldar, Mohammed Ali Khan, met Tantia Tope regarding the Great Revolt[12] but the possibility of such a meeting could be inferred from reports.

The plans of Mohammed Ali Khan were obvious. While seeking shelter with the Raja of Bhanpur he was planning to ransack Saugar in collusion with the Raja. The Raja's troops had once, earlier, during the Great Revolt surrounded the railway station of Lalitpur.

The Begum's anxious moments came when fighting broke out at Pikhlon, a Bhopal territory, but surrounded on all sides by the Gwalior State, it was a far-flung tehsil and became the bone of contention between the Begum and her enemies.

Mohammed Ali Khan and Fazil Mohammed Khan now began to recruit the disbanded Rohillas and Wilaitis on their return from Gwalior.[13] They were both inimical to Bhopal. The Rahatgarh fort situated on a hillock at Saugar was captured by the Nawabs of Ambapani—Nawab Adil Mohammed Khan and Fazil Mohammed Khan. Pathari succumbed after the attack of Fazil Mohammed Khan who asked for reinforcements from Rahatgarh.

Now, Pikhlon, the greatest source of headache to the Begum, was temporarily occupied by the insurgents who included, besides Mohammed Ali Khan, Nawab Itarsiwala, Chhatursal Grasia Agarwala, an Sikander Mohammed Khan along with about 800 troops.[14]

The insurgents established their own *thana* at Pikhlon tehsil which had only 25 men who fled before the might of the insurgents and took refuge in the Bishanpur village.

But the inevitable happened. By 5 December 1857, the Commander-in-Chief of the Bhopal army reported that men of Fazil Mohammmed Khan had deserted for want of salary. He proposed preoccupation of Pikhlon. Two risalas of Sikh sawars were deployed against Fazil Mohammed Khan and Adil Mohammed Khan. The Begum put her reliance on their faithfulness. However, they repaired to the Rahatgarh fort which was besieged by Sir Hugh Rose. In the English counter-attack Fazil Mohammed Khan was killed. The whereabouts of his brother remained unknown.

As rebellion clawed into the otherwise peaceful soil of Bhopal the Begum made an earnest effort to establish a personal liaison with the rebels. She called the erring troops to her presence and admonished them to give up the anti-English stance. They replied:

> We are prepared to obey the Begum but not the British. We are even prepared to carry out her orders were she to ask us to do the scavenging.[15]

Muarwwat Mohammed Khan pleaded with the Begum to cancel her earlier order commanding that the two flags—Nishan-e-Mohammedi and Nishan-e-Mahaviri—be removed lest they should continue to stir the mutinuous sentiments of the soldiers.[16] This was in September 1857, to which the Begum had responded with a stern 'no'.

Sikandar Jehan Begum, meanwhile, got the news that her mother Qudsia Begum, was discharging her experienced soldiers and servants from service ans they were being freely admitted to the forces of the rebel, Fazil Mohammed Khan. She in a letter to her mother remonstrated against this action, but the mother replied that it was being done with an eye to economy. When Sikandar Jahan Begum persisted against discharging those soldiers, the mother expressed strong resentment at the unwarranted interference of her daughter in her internal affairs.

To add to the grisly aspect of the situation, Nawab Begun Mohammed Khan (the first husband of Shahjahan Begum) implored Sikandar Jahan Begum to quickly pay the dues of the ex-Risaldar and an arch rebel, Mohammed Ali Khan, and also to give him the necessary facilities for shifting his family to Bhanpur.[17] Here was a sly attempt of one from the royal family to induce condonation of the rebels' disloyalty to the ruling Nawab and to obtain concessions for him.

But as the fortunes of the war between the insurgents and the loyalist forces fluctuated, Qudsia Begum offered to send one *berho* of 100 jawans attached to her *deorhi* to Ambapani for action against Fazil Mohammed Khan, the rebel. The shrewd daughter, Sikander Jahan Begum, declined the offer. She was inclined to be suspicious of Qudsia Begum's plans to cause defections in the ranks of Fazil Mohammed Khan.

Qudsia Begum bowed to the wishes of her daughter who, in turn showed a streak of solicitude by accepting the mother's suggestion to send 40 jawans to Islamnagar.[18]

The rebels in the north of India had to face humiliation after the capture of Delhi by the British forces in January 1858. The

Begum notified the gist of the Governor-General's proclamation with great gusto which, inter alia, announced:

> The capture of Delhi, the killing of five princes, and warning the people against giving asylum to rebels,with report of Raja of Amjhar and his men having been for rebellion against the British.[19]

As the events rolled along to a climax the news that came on the people as a thunder lap lit the sombre skies in Central India. In June 1858, Bhavani Prasad the Vakil reports:

> A joint attack on Gwalior by Tantya Tope, Rani of Jhansi, Nawab of Banda and Farrakhabad. They occupied Gwalior, and Maharaja Scindia, the ally of the Begum of Bhopal was discomfited temporarily. Rao Saheb's accession to the *Gaddi* in the name of Nana Sahab is announced. However, reports are received that the Agent to Governor-General has arrived at Gopalpur, 28 *kos* from Gwalior.[20]

Finally, Sir Hugh Rose recaptured Gwalior.[21] Rani of Jhansi died a martyr and the Scindia was restored as ruler in Gwalior.

In Bhopal, the Nishan-e-Mohammedi and Nishan-e-Mahaviri were removed, and on 1 July 1858 the Begum issued a proclamation that peace and order had been restored in the State.[22] She commanded the District Collectors to arrest the runaway rebels, to ban the entry of the Gwalior insurgents into Bhopal and to liquidate the rebels, local or otherwise.

Sikandar Jahan Begum, as a ruler, was enlightened. She put her State economy in good shape and reorganised the army. With such a powerful ruling chief as the ally of the British during the Great Revolt, it was a foregone conclusion that the Revolt would not be able to make and headway in the Begum's territory. Subsequently when the Great Revolt was put down and the British forces gained mastery of the situation, the Begum of Bhopal was rewarded with a complete *pargana* of Berasia which was hitherto held by the Dhar State under the Marathas who had joined the rebels. Lord Canning praised her services at a *darbar* in 1861. Bhopal was one single State in the whole of Malwa and Central India which stood steadfast by the British power. The schism on the other hand between the ruler and her people had already made its appearance.

> The Begum, however, was somewhat assertive of her rights and asked the British Government to allow her to try the British subjects who were

guilty of offences committed within her own territory. But the British government did not agree on the plea that the Treaty of Raisen clearly stipulated that the Nawab of Bhopal was to "act in subordinate co-operation with the British Government" and so the question of her having the right to punish the guilty British subjects did not arise.

Sikandar Jahan Begum was granted a permanent salute of 19 guns in 1867 and a permanent local salute of 21 guns. She died in October 1868 and after her Shahjahan Begum assumed the reins of administration.

In 1878, the Bhopal battalion served in the Afghan campaign thus marking co-operation between the Bhopal rulers and the British even outside of India.

In 1880, a railway line was constructed between Bhopal and Hoshangabad.[23] The State paid fifty lakh rupees on that account for receiving in perpetuity profits which might accrue on that sum.

In 1881, Qudsia Begum died, and her *jagir* lapsed to the State. Her personal property amounting to nearly fifteen lakhs rupees was inherited by Shahjahan Begum, the daughter of Sikandar Jahan Begum.

About Qudsia Begum, the local account are glowing. She was a liberal and kindly woman who held the balance even between the Hindus and the Muslims; charity flowed to them with equal generosity; people still remember the tales handed down by their grandfathers of the charges of rebellion levelled by the British government against her, and recall how she kept aloof during the Great Revolt of 1857.

Shahjahan Begum was the ruling power out her husband, Siddiq Hasan Khan, enjoyed the title of Nawab. It is alleged that her husband's interference in state affairs brought forth the British government's interposition. The Nawab was deprived of his title and honours and forbidden from interfering in state matters.

However, the other view points Siddiq Hasan Khan in a different colour and perspective. Even on the admission of Sultan Jahan Begum in her autobiography, Nawab Siddiq Hasan was an erudite person, a man of letters, and an individual of considerable

independence of views. He was the author of *Majmma Khutub, Hadayat-us-Sail* and *Iktarabat-us-Seal*. The three books were written ostensibly on religious themes, but in reality they were a veiled attack on the British government. Sultan Jahan Begum reports on the events subsequent to the publication of the books:

> These books were published just at the time when the British Army was pursuing the Mehadi in Soudan and it was not long before they were brought to the notice of the Government of India how at once dispatched them to Sir Lepel Griffin, Agent to the Governor-General for Central India. On receipt of these books Sir Lepel Griffin, through the Political Agent in Bhopal, explained to Siddiq Hasan Khan the evil consequences of such writing and warned him against committing such an offence. To this warning Siddiq Hansa Khan paid no attention whatever, and in the course of the next two years published several more books on an equally questionable character.[24]

It is abundantly clear that Siddiq Hasan Khan was a rebel in the Nawab family who had the courage to call into question the established British Raj to which the Bhopal royal family had been went to paying unflinching homage. The disgrace caused to him by the British, seen in this perspective, is that so one who fell a prey to the British wrath, and the machinations of the court of Bhopal. An Urdu publication of the time, *Tarikh-e-Ulka, Bhopal*[25] deals with the activities and influence of Siddiq Hasan Khan. It dwells on the causes that partly led to the British wrath which descended on him soon after he married Shah Jahahn Begum. Even before marrying her, Siddiq Hasan Khan outshone many court luminaries by his administrative ability and erudition. By the marriage with the Begum as her second husband he came to occupy a pre-eminent position in the counsels of the Begum. He relegated her into the seclusion of the *purdah* and assumed full authority of the state. *Tarikh-e-Ulka, Bhopal* mentions with approval how Siddiq Hasan Khan made his consort, the Begum, to rule from behind the *purdah* and to don a *burqua*.

However, in his great enthusiasm to set things in order according to his heart's desire, Siddiq Hasan Khan began to sweep away the cobwebs in the administration. He dismissed many old State servants and officers, and introduced several reforms. In the

meantime it was widely believed that Siddiq Hasan Khan was a Wahabi (an Islamic cult which was thought hostile to the British government). Notwithstanding his denial, Siddiq Hasan Khan's intellectual roots were in the Wahabi cult.

All that meant trouble, inside and outside of the State. The local populace, being largely illiterate looked upon his Wahabi inclinations as heretical, and grew suspicious. Only a coterie of intellectuals followed him in his Wahabi beliefs. On the other hand, the officers, courtiers, and other servants whom he had dismissed from State service began to plot against him and to seen complaints to the British. His Wahabi beliefs were exploited by the pro-British group. His publications also highlighted his anti-British stance. It let no doubt in the mid of the British that he was inimical to them.

There were instances, as reported in *Taikh-e-Ulka Bhopal* when Siddiq Hasan Khan made public utterances in support of some rebels against the British rule. His intellectual honesty and his great erudition had the better of tact; evidently he was not inclined to compromise his beliefs for expediency.

The Wahabi movement in India was radical in politics and puritan in religion. The pan-Islamic movement which originated in Arabia had its repercussions in India. Syed Abdulla Brelvi was its Indian leader. Dr. Hunter, the historian, called the Wahabis "anabaptists, so to speak, touching mattes of faith, communists and red republicans in politics".

The peasant discontent in Bengal in the nineteenth century found an outlet in the Wahabi movement, Titu Miyan led the peasant revolt in Faridpur, Nadea, and Twenty-four Parganas. According to some historians, the Muslim intellectual forbears of the Great Revolt were the Wahabis. However, the impact of the Wahabi movement was more intense in India between 1820 and 1860. Even after the Great Revolt came to an end, the embers of the Wahabi movement were kept alive by some revolutionaries.

Siddiq Hasan Khan's Wahabi beliefs, though centered on the original tenets of the faith, appeared heretical to the general public of Bhopal. Its political impact, therefore, was confined to a group of intellectuals and courtiers who supported Siddiq Hasan Khan. The latter still sang praises of the few Muslims of Bhopal who had

fought against the British in the Great Revolt. Siddiq Hasan Khan died in 1880.

Shah Jahan Begum's loyalty to it so much influenced the British government that in 1891, in recognition of her work, she was exempted from the obligation to present *nazar* to the Viceroy.

Shah Jahan Begum died in 1901 and was succeeded by Sultan Jahan Begum, who was born on 9 July 1851. Sultan Jahan Begum's husband Ahmad Ali Khan, was recognised as Nawab consort; he died in 1902.

During Shah Begum died in 1901 nd was succeeded by Sultan Jahan Begum, how was born on 9 July 1851. Sultan Jahan Begum's husband Ahmad Ali Khan, was recognised as Nawab consort; he died in 1902.

During Shah Jahan Begum's tenure as ruler the interference of some notables of the royal family in State affairs led to a great deal of corruption and mal-administration. Referring to it, Sultan Jahan Begum write in her autobiography:

> If the revenue administration was bad, judicial affairs were an even worse case. Laws and courts of justice there certainly were, but any appeal to them which was not backed up by full purse was made in vain. Civil suits were little more than bribery competition and criminals were acquitted or convicted according to the means at their disposal. The high officials of the State had their private agents in every district whose business it was to line patron's pockets, receiving in return protection while they lined their own. If a complain against a sub-ordinate officer was made to the Begum, she referred the matter to the minister and the person who lodged the complaint against ministers was equally futile; for Imtiaz Ali Khan had his full share of Lucknow eloquence and he easily persuaded Her Highness to regard such attacks as gross and malicious libels on his spotless character. The consequences of his three years' administration are apparent to this day and the State is still engaged in undoing the mischief which he wrought. Most of those who aided him in his corruption were from Lucknow. They came, many of them, as Tahsilar on small pay and in a little while more than two years later returned to their native city as wealthy men. It is little wonder, then that there is keen competition in Lucknow for posts in the Bhopal State which was evidently regarded as a modern El Dorado.[26]

Sultan Jahan Begum did make attempts to improve matters

and brought about a certain order in the chaos; however, one must notice the reference to men from outside the State being recruited to high posts. Men from Lucknow, and later from the Punjab, began to fill up important posts in administration which were turned to their own account regardless of justice and public welfare; it was on account of this incursion of non-Bhopal men into this small State that there grew in Bhopal a political agitation, strangely parochial, but which voiced the feelings of the underdog in the Begum's territory. The tiny discontent blossomed in course of time into a movement with the motto "Bhopal for the Bhopalis" and later into a serious movement against the *musnad* of Bhopal. The rulers of Bhopal cannot escape the blame for the prevailing high handedness because their anti-people stance was responsible for it. Their callous neglect of their own subjects' welfare boomeranged.

## REFERENCES

1. National Archives Bhopal Mutiny Papers Descriptive List Vol. II. Introduction, p. v.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. ii.
4. National Archives Bhopal, *Mutiny Papers, Descriptive List* Vol. IV.
5. File No. 1, page 207 (Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.)
6. *Ibid.*
7. National Archives, Bhopal, *Mutiny Papers Descriptive List,* Vol. IV.
8. File Number 1, p. 207 Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.
9. File Number 19, p. 55 Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.
10. File Number 4, p. 27 Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.
11. Mutiny Papers, Descriptive List, Vol. IV.
12. File Number 79, p. 55 Mutiny Papers Bhopal State Political Department.
13. Mutiny Papers, Descriptive List, Vol. IV.
14. Mutiny Papers, Descriptive List Vol. IV.
15. File Number 1, p. 5 Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.
16. File Number 1, p. 5 Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.
17. Mutiny Papers, Descriptive List, Vol. IV.
18 *Ibid.*

19. File Number 4, p. 67, Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.
20. File Number 4, p. 87, Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.
21. File Number 4, p. 97, Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.
22. File Number 4, p. 100, Mutiny Papers, Bhopal State Political Department.
23. Bhopal State File (Revision Department).
24. Sultan Jahan Begum, *An Account of My Life*, Vol. I, p. 167.
25. It is preserved in the Central Library (Maulana Azad Library) at Bhopal.
26. Sultan Jahan Begum, *An Account of My Life* Vol. I.

## NOTES

1. National Archives Records-Descriptive list on Mutiny Vol. I to IV.
2. Original files in Persian pertaining to the Mutiny. File no. 1, 4,79 National Archives, Bhopal.

# 12

# Introduction of Democratic Reforms

SULTAN JAHAN BEGUM, who assumed power in 1901 was known as a devout Muslim ruler. She was the last woman ruler of Bhopal. She was extremely religious and prayed five times a day according to the Quaranic injunctions. She went on a tour of Europe and visited Constantinople, the city of Caliphs. Like her grand-mother and her mother, she got a mosque built in the city. Her loyalty to the British Government sometimes proved stronger even than some remote religious consideration; this is evident from the support she pledged to the British when the first World War was declared. Turkey, a Muslim country, was an enemy of Britain in that war but Sultan Jahan Begum published a manifesto calling upon her Muslim troopes to fight against the troops of Turkey and she set forth cogent reasons for the directive. Later, she supplied copies of the *Quran* and religious pamphlets for encouragement and comfort of her co-religionists in the Middle East.

It was during her rule that the famous palace-complex named Ahmadabad in the city of Bhopal was built. It commemorated the name of Nawab Nazir-ud-Daula Sultan Miyan Ahmad Ali Khan, the Begum's deceased husband. Bhopal did not have a duly constituted Legislative Assembly to enact laws, but there used to be an assembly called Mujlis Mashwara. However, the general assembly held thirteen sittings in 1906-07 and enacted laws and regulations to which Sultan Jahan Begum gave her assent.[1]

It is of interest to note that in the laws complied and promulgated under the rule of Sultan Jahan Begum here were three

controversial provisions. Although these laws were largely adopted from the British Indian Acts, they contained certain provisions which related to conversion to and from Islam. The controversy they raised even led to a reference by Gandhiji in 1924. We shall discuss this in a later chapter.

Sultan Jahan Begum was an ardent supporter of emancipation of women and she was the first among the ruling chiefs of Bhopal to have taken steps to organise ladies' clubs and other welfare organisations; but what she saw in Europe opened her eyes to the contrast between the state of Indian womanhood and that of the European. She became cold to the ideas of equality and liberty for women in India, although she championed their righteous cause. In her address to the Princess of Wales Ladies Club she said:

> 'I wish that our *purdah* ladies have an idea of the extent of liberty of women of Europe. I have no hesitation in saying that liberty is entirely unsuited to the condition of this country and particularly in the case of Muslims.

However, she advanced the cause of female education, because concluding her address, she declared. "Female education is the foundation of all national success and progress."

To Sultan Jahan Begum goes the credit of introducing many reforms besides her efforts in a big way to start schools and clubs for women. The Begum turned her talented daughter-in-law into a useful agent to speed up her educational endeavour. Her daughter-in-law, Memuna Begum, was beautiful, sensible, loyal, very intelligent, and a great adherent to the Begum's principles. She helped organise ladies classes in home science, nursing, hygiene, gestation, and child nursing. The Begum and she established in Bhopal a women's hospital, a State school for girls and an industrial school offering instruction in Mughal embroidery in gold and silver, basket work, and other crafts which women could profitably pursue at home in the seclusion of their *purdah*. What odds she had to fight against could be gauged from the stubborn opposition of the peasantry to small-pox and plague inoculations, but, undaunted, she tried to bring about improvement in the social and hygienic conditions of her subjects.

Sultan Jahan Begum at the age of 64 when she had turned completely grey and thought of retiring, faced a knotty problem. Her eldest grandson was a claimant to the throne of Bhopal. According to the law of primogeniture the eldest son should inherit the throne. The Begum's eldest son had died as also her second son; and she groomed her last son Mohammed Hamidulla Khan, into a promising heir-apparent. She had bestowed on him great care, and gave him good education, fashioned him into a modern young man who was vibrant with zeal to ascend the *musnad.*

Sultan Jahan Begum finally succeeded in pesuading the British government to recognise her surviving son as the heir-apparent to the Bhopal throne, the law of primogeniture notwithstanding. She had gone to England to plead with the British government when the rival claimants began to rally round her grandson. She and Prince Hamidulla Khan returned to Bhopal beaming with joy at the success of their mission. She finally abdicated in favour of her son, Mohammed Hamidulla Khan, on 17 May 1926.

Hamidulla Khan on assuming the powers of Nawab introduced some far-reaching reforms. He effected separation of the executive from the judiciary, and substituted the raiyatwari system of land-settlement for the *mustagiri* system. He introduced certain measures of local self-government by constituting the Legislative council in 1927, and later by introducing village panchayat as an institution of rural democracy; but the democratic reforms that he introduced were ridden with feudal and bureaucratic elements.

The Legislative Council which he constituted in 1927 consisted for twenty-four members[2] out of whom sixteen were nominated and eight were elected:

***1. Nominated Members***

| | |
|---|---|
| (a) Official | 14 |
| (b) Non-official | 2 |

***2. Elected Members***

| | |
|---|---|
| (a) Representing Mustajirs (Revenue Farmers) | 2 |
| (b) Representing Heridetary Tenants | 2 |

(c) Representing Trade and Commerce 2

(d) Representing the town of Bhopal 2

The franchise was based on property and educational qualifications, and was confined to men of over 21 years of age.

The Legislative Council had the right of inerpellation and of moving resolutions on important public matters. It could enact or amend laws except those relating to itself, the High Court, the Army, and official secrets. It was debarred from legislation on a sentence of death being pronounced or executed except in accordance with the Shariyat of Islam.

Every bill was submitted to the ruler, the Nawab, for his assent who could withhold it or return to the Council for reconsideration.

The Legislative Council, being almost entirely ridden with bureaucracy, could hardly be expected to voice the grievances or represent the will of the people. The Shariyat of Islam also made its impact on the power of the deliberations of the Council.

Besides the Legislative Council, there was the State Council reconstituted in 1927-28. It consisted of the following members:

1. Sir Oswald Bosanquet
2. Rai Bahadur Raja Awadh Narayan Bisariya
3. Maulwi Sayyad Lyakat Ali
4. Dr. Sayid-u-Zafar Khan
5. Colonel H. C. S. Ward

It should be noted that of the five members of the State Council two were Englishmen—Sir Oswald Bosanquet and Colonel Ward, the former being the President of the Revenue Department and the latter in charge of the Army. Thus, two vital portfolios were entrusted to the charge of Englishmen. Comparison the State Council constituted by Nawab Hamidullah Khan, with the State Council of his mother, Sultan Jahan we find that her Council consisted of six members of whom five were Muslims and one a Hindu, but no Englishman.

Nawab Hamidulla Khan received his higher education at Aligarh Muslim University and was one of the brightest alumni and an ardent supporter. He had a good knowledge of the fundamentals

of political history, constitutional reforms, and Western political thought. He tried to bring to bear upon the administration of his State the impact of modern ideas but in a framework which was thoroughly bureaucratic and feudal.

It is interesting to see how the rulers of the time responded to popular upsurge in their States. Certain advanced States introduced reforms in doses. Among the Malwa States the immediate neighbour of Bhopal was Indore. Both the Bhopal and Indore rules participated in the first Round Table Conference held in London in 1930. The Nawab of Bhopal was particularly enthusiastic about the idea of a federal structure of the Government of India although he was a more fervent advocate of paramountcy of princes. In Indore, a political organisation called Indore Rajya Parishad started to function in 1921 which put forward the demand for responsible government in the State.[3] Even a semblance of popular movement was frowned upon by the Indore ruler and repressive measures were let loose. It was in 1936 that the Praja Mandal was reconstituted to be an effective forum of Indore State people's demand for a representative government.

The Nawab of Bhopal, by introducing the Sate Council and the Legislative Council in 1927, successfully put up a facade of responsible government which his long suffering subjects had accepted meekly. The faint reverberations of popular struggles in British India were heard and stirred some sections of the Bhopal subject to prepare to act.

## REFERENCES

1. Bhopal Administration Reports (1906-07)
2. Bhopal Administration Reports (1930).
3. *Indore District Gazetteer.*

# 13

# The People's Early Struggles

BHOPAL, like other Indian States, was unaffected by the larger people's movements aiming at political reforms and the country's independence which considerably affected British India in the years prior to the First World War. The Indian National Congress was founded in British Indian in 1885 but its activities were confined to the British-ruled territories. The Indian States were let to manage their own affairs without any interference from external political parties.

During the rule of Sultan Begum people from outside the State used to be invited and offered attractive jobs in the service of the State. There arose a faint discontentment against the influx of non-Bhopalis who began to occupy position of vantage. Bhopal, even in that remote past, could boast of such patriots as Barkatualla Khan who made a name for himself in the international sphere in which an offshoot of the war of independence was sought. Another notable son of Bhopal who won fame as a leader of independence movement outside Bhopal and India was Sayid Razmi.

In 1920, Gandhiji seized the opportunity of blending the anti-British frenzy which animated the Muslims of India following the abolition of the Caliphate with the wider sweep of a blazing fury in the wake of the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre and the Rowlatt Act. He was not alone in espousing the cause of the pro-Khilafat Muslim. Bal Gangadhar Tilak joined him in upholding his stand on the Khilafat issue.

The Ulema of India, who had tasted the power and glory ot issuing fatwa and obtaining their compliance during the Great Revolt, stood largely dismayed when the Revolt ultimately failed. The turn of fortune now swung round and the Muslim divines looked forward once again to taking hand in shaping history. Politics was now getting mixed up with religious issues although they were pan-national in character. The Khilafat movement which advocated non-cooperation had leaders such as Ajmal Khan, Shouka Mohammed Ali, and Abul Kalam Azad all following the strategy of non-cooperation enunciated by Gandhiji.

Bhopal was not unaffected by the Khilafat movement. As has been pointed out earlier, some Khilafat incidents, in fact, proved a grooming process for the younger political workers some of whom, as time passed, became stern critics adversities of the Nawab of Bhopal. Among them was Najja Dada, whose real name as Abdul Hafeez. As he mellowed in political activities, and the Nawab treated the traditional path of the princely autocracy elsewhere, Nijja Dada became a more and more determined adversary of the ruler. Later, as events rolled by and Bhopal presented the spectable of a glamorous stable full of foreign stallion, Najja Dada wrote a letter to the Nawab on 17 April 1935 which greatly agitated the dàrbar when it warned Nawab Hamidulla Khan:

> The subjects of Bhopal have been putting up before you, in a civilised manner, the sate of their misery. But your goings-on, your life of luxurious indulgence, your blind support of the Punjabi clique may cause utter ruin. Your prosecution of the journal *Riyasat* is serious drain on the state exchequer. The polo and other luxuries have a bad effect on the public; do not ruin it. To be considerate and mindful of your duties.[1]

During Sultan Jahan Begum's rule, Bhopal used to publish seven monthly and three weekly magazines. Although the periodicals were mainly literary, they did sometimes ventilate people's grievaces against the domination of the non-Bhopalis and against the many restrictions placed upon popular demands. Bhopal could boast of its own periodicals, but no paper published and printed outside. Bhopal was allowed to enter the Bhopal territory.[2] The people of Bhopal were thus prevented from having contact with the refreshing ideas that were sweeping the rest of the country. It is

true that after the first world war a few leaders of Bhopal did try to use the press as a weapon to attack the autocracy but were easily put down; among such were Fyyaz Hussain, Najja Dada, Sayyad Hamid Hussain Rizvi, Sayyad Abdul Kareem, Mannulal Bismil, Shambhu Dayal and Lal Singh. They began to represent the rising popular discontent.

Mohammed Hamidullah Khan had not ye ascended the throne of Bhopal and was a university student at Aligarh when the Khilafat movement rocked India. Gandhiji tried to include the programme of the Khilafat movements as part of the wider national movement aiming at India's independence. The Khilafat movement had its own echoes in Bhopal and its strong pan-Islamic content evoked a ready response among the ruling classes of Bhopal which were predominantly Muslim. Mohammed Hamidullah Khan took a keen interst in the Khilafat movement,and Sayidulla Khan Razmi, Vithal Dass, Bajaj and Najja Dada also took active part in it. But, the Khilafat movement having cooled off and its utility held to be no longer valid, another strong movement began to stir the country to is depth—the Non-cooperation movement started by Gandhiji. Its appeal was acknowledged by the Hindus and the Muslims both, and for the first time the masses of India began to awake. They saw a new horizon of political consciousness. But the aim of the movement was to overthrow the British rule in India. Before such a movement, the students of Aligarh Muslim University bowed in an attitude of cooperations, and its impact on the university life was felt to be so severe that the University would have closed down but for the help rendered by persons such as Mohammed Hamudullah Khan.

Mohammed Hamidullah Khan, a prominent student of Aligarh, came forward to stem the tide of the Non-cooperation movement. His official biography, *Iftikhar-ul-Mulk*,[3] describes Mohammed Hamidullah Khan's role vis-a-vis the Non-cooperation movement in a way which showed his determination to slow down the pace of the movement and then to weaken it. The role of a prince of an Indian State in opposing the Non-cooperation movement was not unexpected.

In a State where the ruler and the nobility held a faith different from that of the large majority of the subjects they had to grapple with a special type of problem. In their realm issues were apt to get a communal tinge because 88 per cent of the population of Bhopal, during the earlier part of Mohammed Hamidullah Khan's rule, were Hindus who had no voice either in administration or in making the laws. When they demanded a particular thing to be done, a matter which needed to be attended to, or a stray grievance to be redressed, they had to assemble clandestinely. Their behaviour would lead one to suspect that a Hindu party ostensibly communal in outlook was voicing its grievances. But in fact it was a real democratic urge of the large majority of the people who wanted to make a point or protest against a royal coercion or to affirm the values of their own faith. Or at times the stifled voice of peasants in the lonely corners of the Nawab's private lands would be seeking a champion.

The laws of Bhopal, which were complied and consolidated during the rule of Sultan Jahan Begum, contained an irksome provision which began to agitate the mind of the Hindus all over India. The provision referred to an amendment to the Shahjahani Penal Code introduced in 1920 which forbade a person who was converted to Islam from seeking reconversion to another faith. The said provision reads as follows:

> *Section 393-A:* Any person renouncing his faith after once embracing Islam shall be liable to be sentenced to punishment of either description extending to three years' imprisonment or to fine, or both.

It was during the rule of Sultan Jahan Begum that he amendment to the Shah Jahani Penal Code was introduced and widely resented by the Hindus inside Bhopal, and by the enlightened public opinion outside it. This law of apostacy and its fantastic provision was brought to the notice of Gandhiji. Gandhiji wrote in the *Young India* on 12 June 1924, commenting upon the provision.

> Friends sent me a copy of the law of the Bhopal Sate now over a month ago. I purposely refrained from dealing with it, because I was no then ready to publish any views on Hindu-Muslim tensions, and because I wanted to make further enquiries into the matter.[4]

Gandhiji had behind him the experience of the Khilafat movement and also of the Non-co-operation movement in which the

Hindus and the Muslims had shown remarkable unity of purpose. He was greatly disturbed that in a Muslim State the law should prohibit re-conversion from Islam and thereby strike at the roots of freedom of religion and of religious tolerance. He wrote further in the same issue of the *Young India:*

> I do no know whether the dates are accurately given. But assuming the correctness, the law is of a fairly recent date. The ideal before us is that the two and, for that matter, all religions should live in peace and that there may be free interchange among them if the people so desire; in other words, there should be no compulsion in religion. Some of us Hindus and Mussalmans are endeavouring to bring up the practice to the level of that ideal. If, therefore, Islam does not make it penal for one who had embraced it to go back to one's own faith the law in question must be considered to be against the spirit of Islam and, therefore,it should be abrogated at the earliest moment. I hope that, if the position it as I have stated, Mussalmans leaders will request Her Highness the Begum Sahiba of Bhopal to repeal the law.

This objectionable law became the rallying point of pan-Hindu agitation and struggle.

Those fifteen years between the Khilafat agitation and the beginning of the State people's awakening saw the emergence of a few organised public forums and also the consolidation of the press, however nascent, in Bhopal.

> According to one account, Najja Dada had entered into a conspiracy with a faction of the royal family to dethrone Sultan Jahan begum in the twenties but was apprehended and rendered inefective. Since then, he continued to be under a menacing threat from the ruler.[5]

From 1923 to 1929 it appeared that the Indian social and political scene showed the spectrum of religious controversies among the Hindus and the Muslims ostensibly fed and strengthened by the hidden arm of the foreign power. The dying embers of the Non-cooperation movement and the veneer of a growing India nationalism wove the pattern of a chimera which one dreaded and still cherished.

The Khilafat agitation having come to an end a long time ago, Sultan Jahan Begum, who had helped the British against Turkey,

heard of the abolition of the Caliphate by the grand national assembly of Turkey. On 6 April 1924, on her instructions, the Bhopal government wrote to the Political Agent on the abolition of Khilafat by the Turkish government:

> As regards the expulsion of the Khalifat from the seat of his authority and the abolition of Khilafat, the action of the Turkish government is unequivocally condemned by the Moslem public opinion of this State. Also, the news of assumption of office by King Hussain has not all been favorably received here.[6]

While the pan-Islamic sentiments of Sultan Jahan Begum were being discharged through the Political Agent by her Publicity Department, there were disconcerting dispatches appearing in the Hindi Press on the state of affairs in Bhopal. Abduction of Hindu girls and their rape and conversion to Islam began to be reported in the press of British India. It was awfully irksome for a ruler of predominantly Hindu subjects to be accused of being negligent of such explosive issues.

The *Vartman* an important newspaper from Kanpur, reported on 30 April 1924 that a Hindu girl was abducted and raped in Bhopal, and that the Hindu youth were caught and confined with a view to converting them to Islam.[7]

Thereupon, the Bhopal government asked the Political Agent to move the British India government to take action against the newspaper.[8] The Political Secretary to the Bhopal government contradicted the report appearing in the *Vartman* and stated that the said girl was a Muslim *dhobi's* daughter. The Political Agent replied to the Bhopal government regretting Government of India's unwillingness to prosecute the editor of the *Vartman*.

The Bhopal government was unwilling to launch a prosecution, either because it took a soft line to the appearance of the report in the *Vartman* or feared that a court trial might establish something which it not relish.

The British India government did not take any executive action against the editor of the *Vartman* for publishing the said report; but it would no certainly let down an ally of the status of the Nawab of Bhopal. Therefore, the United Provinces government arrested and prosecuted the editor of the *Vartman* on a charge of

sedition under section 124-A of the Indian Penal code.[10] The story of the alleged rape soon became the dramatic irony of political sedition. The history of the State reveals a consistent pattern of a league between the Nawab and an imperialist power, and they both rode roughshod over the aspirations of the common people.

The Bhopal government had hardly regained is composure after the *Vartman* reporting of the rape when a major weekly of Kanpur *Partap* edited by no less a person than Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, published another sensational story in is issue of 6 October 1924.[11] Its correspondent reported that at Budni, a village in Bhopal, a cow was slaughtering after two days of Bakr-id. The alleged slaughtering of the cow so sacred the Hindus that they fled to Hoshangabad.

The same paper reported another sensational incident. One Muslim shot dead a pigeon in Jain temple. A complaint was lodged with the local officer who replied that action would be taken if the complaint was proved correct.

The Political Agent at Sehore asked for full particulars of the incidents from the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government, who replied:

> Some Muslim officials of Budni decided to sacrifice a cow in celebration of the Id festival. On this, one Brijlal along with some villagers began to dissuade the officers from sacrificing the cow. The Muslim officers refused, but later sacrificed the cow in concealment in some out of the way place so that the sentiments of the Hindus may not be hurt.

Subsequently all the inhabitants including *Dhimars* and *Chamars* left Budni en mass resolving never to return.

The Bhopal government took cognisance of this highly regrettable incident and deputed a Nazim to personally inquire into the mater.[12] He effected a reconciliation whereby the Hindus pledged never to interfere with the religious observances of the Muslims, and the Muslims to show every consideration to the feelings of the Hindus.

To cap it all, Sultan Jahan Begum ordered that all those officers at Budni concerned with the case should be gradually

transferred elsewhere. Thus ended a painful situation but it was only a palliative because the disease was too deep-rooted.

The Bhopal government would not allow a political party such as the Indian National Congress to be formed within it jurisdiction. Besides, barring the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee, no other Provincial Congress Committee favoured opening of branches in their neighbouring Indian States. The grievance against the highhandedness of the ruler, therefore, sometimes found it vent in the Arya Samaj. In 1925, four clerks of the Jawar Tehsil were transferred for doing propaganda and making preparation for organising Arya Samaj meetings.[13] Those overenthusiastic clerks-Kishanlal Dayalal, Shankar Dayal, and others were transferred to Ashta and Raisen.

The twenties saw another phenomenon in Bhopal. Anti-communist trend made inroads into the politically immature ethos of Bhopal. The Government of India's 'look out' and 'banned' notices were promptly acted upon by the Bhopal government. The government of India warned the Indian States that the Comintern was busy spreading its propaganda net wide across Asia.[14] The Political Agent in his letter of 16 May 1924 wrote to the Bhopal government that the Comintern was preparing to launch a propaganda campaign outside the Soviet Union and some books (list enclosed) were being translated into Turkish and Persian. The photographs of important Bolshevik leaders were also being sent to those countries. The Bhopal government kept a vigil to check this unwelcome infiltration.

Another ominous warning that came to Bhopal from the Government of India was that 3,000 copies of a pamphlet entitled "Political letters of M. N. Roy" had been printed in France and were being sent to India by post.[15] The Bhopal government alerted its officers.

And the human side of the episode came out vividly in a flash in 1937 when the Government of India asked the Bhopal government to be watchful when the girl friend of M. N. Roy, Ellen Gotschaalt, visited India to meet Roy: they were engaged to get married in the third week of March, 1937 and thereafter scheduled to attend a communist convention.

The Bhopal government, under instructions from the Government of India, banned entry into Bhopal, whether by land or by air of a Urdu weekly published from New York entitled *Yade Waen*[16] as it was considered seditious. It was edited by Syed Husain.

Another important 'look out' notice in 1927 was for one Mahabharat Vidyalankar, who had joined the British Communist Party in London, was formerly an Arya Samajist, and was expected in India to carry on communist propaganda. The Bhopal administration kept an anxious watch on his entry into the State which was never made.

Mahendra Pratap, the legendary freedom fighter, also figure in a 'look out' notice.[18] The Government of India had noticed his "seditious activities" in a Geneva conference in 1927. The Bhopal government was advised to seize copies of his pamphlet entitled 'Economic Conferences'. But Bhopal, in 1927, did not find anything connected with Mahendra Pratap within its territory.

Way back in the first decade of the twentieth century, a noble son of Bhopal, Barkaulla Khan, had joined a band of revolutionaries overseas, and along with Mahendra Pratap formed a provisional government of independent India in Afghanistan. But that was in 1907.

The twenties saw a faint glimmer of the Wahabi influence left as a legacy by Siddiq Hasan Khan. Despite his acknowledged erudition and rebellious flair, some accounts described him as fanatically communal in outlook who did a good deal of damage to the Hindus in Bhopal. It is to this fact that some members of a Hindu Conference made a reference while putting forward their twenty-four demands in 1932.

An organisation called Hindu Raj Praja Parishad wished to hold its conference on 18-19 March 1932 but was dispersed "with the sword of suppression", as the organisers put it.[19]

The Wahabi influence had more or less flickered out when news came in 1924 that the Ulema at Bhopal had issued a *fatwa* in favour of the Wahabi Maulvi of Bhopal, Mohammed Ali. However, the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Bhopal, wrote to the Secretary, Law and Justice Department, Bhopal: "No such fatwa appears to

have been issued by Bhopal Ulema and nothing is known here of Maulvi Mohammed Ali."

The backdrop of Bhopal from 1922 to 1932 presented a bizarre scene of episodes smacking of religious fanaticism and of suspected communist infiltration.

The Nawab of Bhopal, Hamidulla Khan, cultivated friendship with many important public figures in the Indian National Congress, ostensibly with the intention of appeasing nationalist grievances in his own State. Dr. Ansari, a Congress leader, made repeated visits to Bhopal in 1922 and 1924. Sultan Jahan Begum was the ruler, and Hamidullah Khan, the Nawabzada. The Political Agent got suspicious of the repeated visits of the Congress leader to Bhopal, but the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government explained that Dr. Ansari came on professional visits as a physician under whom the members of the royal family received medical treatment. Later, Nawab Hamidullah Khan could count, among his valued acquaintances, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhiji, and others.

Reference has been made earlier to the activities of four clerks in propagating the Arya Samaj principles and using the platform for political purposes. That was in 1925. It is believed that earlier a Swami of Arya Samaj from outside the State established Arya Samaj in Bhopal and opened a Hindu orphanage.[22] But the Bhopal administration brought about a quarrel between Lal Singh, another Arya Samaj leader. The result was that the Swami had to leave the State.

Although the cross-currents of the period under review show religious frenzy and infiltration of pro-communist ideas, there were instances in Bhopal when in 1926 some influential men organised on agitation to secure employment for the Bhopalis. This movement was politico-economic in character and was wholly secular. The main organisers were Asghar Ansari and Fazal Ansari. But the Bhopal administration monoeuvred this agitation by offering lucrative jobs to the leaders.

However, in 1926, a big public meting was held in Bhopal at which fiery speeches were made denouncing the Bhopal

government's policy of importing non-Bhopalis and installing them in high places of authority. Mannulal Bismil presided over the meetings. So he had to incur the wrath of the Nawab and he and his comrades were externed from Bhopal.

On 24 May, 1926, the Political Agent wrote to the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government that a dangerous agitator of the name of Bhagwan Din was planning to enter the State. He was stated to be the Headmaster of Nagpur National School wheel the "incited" students to become "madmen who were in anguish at the condition of their country".[23] He was arrested in 1921, released in 1922, but continued his Congress activities with unabated zeal. He took interest in Nagpur satyagraha in 1923 and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He made violent speeches and advocated civil disobedience movement. He had addressed meeting a Bilaspur and Seoni. He was described as of "stern, ascetic appearance which he is careful to cultivate as much as possible". The Bhopal authorities were greatly perturbed over his possible entrance into the State and kept a watch.

Another 'look out' was issued in 1931 for watching the activities of one Muslim citizen of North-Western Frontier Province—Mohammed Ayub.[24] He was suspected of being a Soviet spy, and to crown it all, he was found to be reading the Red Shirt movement's main organ *The Pakhtum*. The Red Shirt movement had made no impact so far on the Bhopal public. Hence the trepidations of the Bhopal government.

Thus, during the decade between 1922 and 1932, the Bhopal government was besieged by agitations, big and small, which had hardly any ideological core. They were mainly directed against injustices perpetrated on the native population of Bhopal, either on religious or economic grounds.

The running sore in the body politic of the Hindus was the apostacy law which forbade the reconversion of a Muslim of anther faith. It aroused fierce controversies. From far and near the public opinion condemned it. The Secretary of the Hindu Sabha, Naya Bazar, Delhi, sent to the Bhopal government a copy of the resolution of such a tiny Hindu Sabha as at Deori passed on 4 March 1928.[25]

On the other hand, some important persons from Bhopal wrote articles in the *Hamdard* of Delhi pleading for the release of Gandhiji. One such article appeared in the name of A. Waris on 24 November 1923 which pleaded in moving terms: "Youth must unite and strive for Mahatma Gandhi's, the Sabarmai Jogi's, release. The saint must be rescued from prison." It went on to call the attention of students to the freedom movement in Egypt

Together with the Khuddame-Watan movement and the undercurrents of the pro-Hindu Sabha agitation which centred on 'conversion to Islam' and demands of the Hindus went the strong ripple of terrorist movements, which we shall discuss in a subsequent chapter.

Although only on citizen of Bhopal courted arrest in the Civil Disobedience movement (of which more in a subsequent chapter), there were disguised agencies at work in Bhopal in a clandestine manner helped the Congress-sponsored movement outside the State. One such agency was detected in Singer Sewing Machine Company. The political Agent reported that in the North-West Frontier Province, the agents of this Company were known to facilitate the transmission of correspondence from and to political prisoners.[26] A strict which was kept also in Bhopal on persons of thin description.

Curiously one Maulvi, Moin-ud-din, who was once a staunch Khilafatist and non-cooperator, visited Indore and Mhow in July 1926 and delivered discourses.[27] There was nothing political or communal in his speeches. He was moving about as the President of Ajmer Tablig Committee which was in fact an organisation of preach and propagate the tenets of Islam. He was a paid worker of the committee.

The Political Agent in Bhopal was particularly curious to know how the former non-cooperators turned into Islamic preachers and proselytisers, and advised the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government to notice if anything of interest could be got from Moin-ud-din when he visited Bhopal.

From time to time the British rulers had toyed with the idea of grouping smaller Indian States into one single unit for administrative purposes and later in 1939 declared it to be their official policy. They had experimented with the idea in the case of the Shan States of

Burma. In the sphere of reforms the British administrators were seized of the need for persuading the princes to introduced democratic reforms lest agitations such as the Civil Disobedience movement should start in their States. Later, it was Lord Linlithgow who pressed on the princes the urgency of such reforms especially after Gandhiji had made his famous 3 December 1938 speech in which he acclaimed simultaneous awakening of the people in the India States.

Although Bhopal was not counted as a minor State and therefore its merger into a bigger unit in pre-independence India was out of the question, the geographical and economic situation provided those political compulsions which swept the people of Bhopal towards a merger in bigger units of independent India.

The growth of the political movement in Bhopal was slow and lacked for a long time a broad-based popular support. The Khilafat movement could draw within its fold Hamidullah Khan who had not yet ascended the throne. In 1925-26, a kind of a Congress Committee was established in Sehore and Bhopal. Vithal Das Bajaj, Lakshmanayya, Raghuvir Sharma, Sayidullah Khan, etc. did a good bit of propaganda work for awakening national consciousness in the people of those areas. Mannulal Bismil was arrested for writing a seditious article, that being the first instance of a political arrest. In 1927-28, Bhopal saw the opening of a Khadi Bhandar. Gandhiji visited Bhopal in 1929 and in honour of his visit Nawab Hamidulah Khan decorated his palace with Khadi which impressed Gandhiji. A public reception was accorded to him at Benazir. In 1931, a Hindu Seva Sangh was established. An organisation called Young Men Association was formed in which the youth from the Sehore high school and non-student young men were important workers. At Sehore school a student's strike was organised which lasted for three days, an unbeard of thing for an Indian State.

## REFERENCES

1. File Number 28, B. Number 207 (Bhopal State P. D. Files).
2. An Article by Chaturnarain Malviya, the former Chief Minister of the Bhopal State, in *Madhya Pradesh Sandesh*, independence member.
3. Published in 1927, p. 32

4. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi,* Vol. XXIV, p. 237.
5. Author's conversation with Shakir Ali Khan. Najja Dada, it is said, died in suspicious circumstances.
6. File Number 15, B. number 89 (23-24), Bhopal State P. D Files.
7. File Number 22, B. number 89 (23-24), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. File Number 10, B. Number 99 (24-25), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
12. File Number 10, B. Number 99 (24-25), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
13. File Number 29, B. Number 99 (24-25), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
14. File Number 27, B. Number 89 (23-24) Bhopal State P. D. Files.
15. File Number 40, B. Number 89 (19-24) Bhopal State P. D. Files.
16. File Number 22, B. Number 89 (24), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
17. File Number 237, B. Number 122 (26-27), Bhopal State P. D. Files
18. File Number 255, B. Number 122 (26-27), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
19. File Number 36, B. Number 207 (19-35), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
20. File Number 34, B. Number 89 (23-24), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
21. File Number 11, B. Number 89 (23-24), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
22. Authors conversation with Shakir Ali Khan.
23. File Number 224, B. Number 112 (26-26), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
24. File Number 56, B. Number 124 (27-28), Bhopal Sate P. D. Files.
25. File Number 61, B. Number 124 (27-28), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
26. File Number 81, B. Number 176, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
27. File Number 241, B. Number 99, Bhopal State P. D. Files.

# 14

# The Struggles Deepen

NAWAB HAMIDULLAH KHAN, who was a product of Aligarh Muslim University and later became its Chancellor, was deeply influenced by the people and the atmosphere of his alma mater. He was convinced that if he were to rule successfully he must bring as advisers to the Government of Bhopal those persons who were most loyal and friendly to him at the university. As things stood then, such persons were largely the Panjabis.

So, when Hamidullah Khan ascended the throne in 1927 he planted a strong coterie of Panjabi Muslims in high positions. The Panjabi Muslim advisers set about planning an integrated government which should have nothing to fear in the future. They succeeded in convincing the Nawab that Bhopal would slip out of his power because the strong trends were towards democratic rights, and the Hindus being in the majority would establish their hold despite his monarchical system of government. The solution to it, they argued, lay in immediately importing a large number of Muslim families from the Punjab and elsewhere and in settling them in the State.

The Nawab readily accepted the suggestion and soon the native population saw truckloads of Muslim families being brought into Bhopal for whom quarters were vacated and food prepared and served. The immigrants received royal treatment as if they were State guests.

The question of settling them was sought to be solved by allotting them agricultural land all over the State. In order that these lands might be properly irrigated, the Government of Bhopal built, for the first time in the history, a dam on the Palakamati river.

Irrigation sources were tapped in a modern way of the benefit of the Panjabi Muslims who began to swell in numbers, and it soon became the object of envy of the local inhabitants of Bhopal who had long been denied such facilities and led a bare hand-to-mouth existence.[1] At an exhibition held by the Bhopal government somewhere in the twenties the popular refrain of a song sued to be:

जब पेट में हो रोटियां तब नुमाइश काम की

(The exhibition can be of use only when people are properly fed.)

A man by the name Kaisar Khan who used to sing that song collectively injected the first stirrings of a nascent revolutionary urge. He was arrested and imprisoned. That was way back in the previous decade. The situation so far as the local population was concerned did not improve. That accounts for the growing animosity with which the inhabitants of Bhopal began to view the Panjabi Muslim immigrants. The Nawab gave the Panjabi Muslim a large share in the higher echelons of administration. The natives, both Hindus and Muslims, watched with the impotent rage their rights and prerogatives being snatched away from them.

To channelise the popular discontent, which was crystallising into clearcut factions called "Mulkis" and "non-Mulkis" on the lines of the Hydeabad State nomenclature, the native population soon found a champion in Shakir Ali Khan. Shakir Ali Khan was first employed as a Naik in the Sultania Infantry of Bhopal and later worked as a Ryotwari Moharrir under the Nawab's administration.[2] For reasons known only to the Bhopal government he had to leave the service in 1932. In 1933, he was caught in the swirling tide of mass resentment and destiny threw him up as leader of the Bhopalis. He founded an association called Anjuman Khuddam-e-Watan which set before itself the avowed objective of amelioration of the conditions of the Bhopalis as against the intruding Panjabi Muslims.

Here was an instance of local patriotism which animated the people and assumed the dimensions of a political, although parochial, movement.

Anjuman Khuddam-e-Watan whipped up the people's anger against the State officials and held up to ridicule the government of the Nawab. Shakir Ali Khan found an ally in Tarzi Mashriqui,

55-year-old Pathan, an made him President of Anjuman Khudam-e-Watan. Tarzi Mashriqui was and ardent champion of "Bhopal for the Bhopalis" and fought its battles shoulder to shoulder with Shakir Ali Khan.

The two together founded a newspaper called Sabah-i-Watan. In august 1934, Shakir Ali Khan published a cartoon in the Subah-i-Watan ridiculing the judiciary. He was prosecuted and sentenced to two months imprisonment for contempt of court. The pressure of public opinion, however, made the government release him after seventeen days of imprisonment.

Tarzi Mashriqui spoke vehemently in public meetings after the arrest of Shakir Ali Khan denouncing the government.[3] He too was arrested and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment in 1935. However, he tenders an apology and petitioned for mercy, after which he was released.

One of the oldest political workers who was once a Khilafatist and non-cooperator was Abu Saeed Razmi.[4] In 1922, he delivered an impassioned speech at Chhola in Bhopal on the death of Bal Gangadha Tilak. He was a Congressite and anti-British to the core. At Ajmer, where he became President of Navajawan Sabha, he made a vitriolic attack on the British India government for its execution of Bhagat Singh. He was prosecuted and asked to furnish security for good behaviour.

Back in Bhopal he started an organisation called Anjuman Riyaya which ultimately failed. On 25 August 1934 and again on 30 September 1934 he delivered inflammatory speeches and criticised the officials of the Bhopal government.

After the arrest of Shakri Ali Khan, Hafiz Abdul Quddus, a 28 year old youth who was a graduate but failed in his ambitions of a good career,became a zealous worked of Anjuman Riyaya.[5] Being a writer with a flair, he contributed articles to the *Subah-i-Watan* and the *Awaz.* He presided over the public meeting held to protest against the arrest of Shakir Ali Khan.

Hasan, son of Ahmed Hasan, an impulsive young man of 22 years, became the Secretary of Anjuman Khuddam-e-Watan after the arrest of Shakir Ali Khan.

Of the persons who helped Shakir Ali Khan in his political and journalistic endeavours were two important ones—Mohammed Ahmed Makki and Hazi Rafiq Hasan.

Mohammed Ahmed Makki was the son of the Jagirdar and a former M. L. C. but of poor education.[6] He joined Shakir Ali Khan and as joint editor of the *Subah-i-Watan* was sentenced to two months' imprisonment. He was the hard core of the Shakir Ali Khan group which was vocal journalistically. He wrote in two weeklies *The Punch* and *Musheera Watan*. For publishing "Objectionable' articles in them, he was asked to furnish surety which was not furnished. Both the weeklies became defunct.

Hazi Rafiq Hasan on the arrest of Shakir Ali Khan, took charge of the *Sabah-i-Watan* as editor.[7] The paper was proscribed, and he began to edit it from Delhi. He was a personal friend of Dewan Singh, editor of the *Riyasat* and a determined detractor of the Bhopal government.

The "Bhopal for the Bhopalis" movement forged ahead with full gusto along its chalked-out programme of local struggle appearing ridiculously parochial and narrow from outside, but having at its core the pulsations of a beaten people who got restive on account of external intrusions.

The other strong cross-currents in the public life of Bhopal were the Hindu Sangathan and Shuddhi movements having affiliations with all-India organisations. An Important leader of this movement, who later became an ardent Congressman, was Lal Singh.

Lal Singh was a teacher in Alexandra high school but resigned in July 1934.[8] He began to work on the lines of Hindu Mahasabha. He became President of the Bhopal Hindu Sabha. He was quick to see the whirlpool in which the Hindus would soon find themselves if they did not press for their rights. To that end, he started to publish a weekly, *Praja Pukar*, of which he was editor. The paper gave account of minor and major incidents in which the Hindus were shown to be suffering under disabilities. He proved a headache to the Nawab administration, security was demanded from the *Praja Pukar* and it ceased publication from Bhopal.

Lal Singh until his conversion to the ideal of a common platform such as Praja Mandal was one of the architects of the "twenty-four" demands of the Hindus. He attended the session of the Hindu Mahasabha in December 1933 at Pune as a delegate. Besides his pro-Hindu Shuddhi and Sangathan activities, Lal Singh was actively interested in organising the peasant of Bhopal.

Another Hindu Sabha leader was Sheonarain.[9] His was a case of open hostility to the Government of Bhopal. In 1932, he along with Parmanad and Dewan Singh, arranged to hold a public meeting in Bhopal. He even obtained Government's permission to hold it. But when the intentions of the organisers of the meeting became known to the governments was banned. Their aim was to launch an agitation on the basis of the twenty-four demands of the Hindus. Sheonarian got some articles highly critical of Bhopal published under factitious names, but was later caught doing so in consultation with Dr. Moonje. He was sentenced to imprisonment for two months. He got a pamphlet published at the Karmveer Press, Khandwa, in which vehemently pleaded for conceding the twenty-four demands of the Hindus.

To counteract Sheonarian's propaganda, the government used Najja Dada who through the instrumentality of Moolchand Lalwani and Mulk Raj got posters against him printed, and organised meeting to checkmate Sheonarain's activities.

Two more important figures in public life closely allied in their activities were Vithal Das and Laxmanayya.[10] Vithal Das was related to Govind Das, the popular Congress leader of Jabalpur. Under his inspiration Vithal Das was an ardent champion of he Shuddhi movement. At the same time, he was reported to be under the influence of Makhanlal Chaturvedi who inspired him to open a Khadi Bhandar at Bhopal. He was anti-British in his outlook and was President of the Achhut Uddhar Sabha of Bhopal.

Laxmanayya was an old political worker. He had been under police surveillance since 1921. Well up in Sanskrit he was engaged by Vithal Das's father as a priest. he was a personal friend of Vithal Das. Police ascribed to him extreme Shuddhi and cow protection beliefs. He was responsible for inculcating political spirit in Vithal Das. He was convicted and sentenced to six months' imprisonment

under ordinance 5 of 1932, at Narsinghpur in the Hoshangabad district. He was a personal friend of Raghunath Persai, Secretary of the States People's Conference.

The police used to keep a close watch on Laxmanayya. From the supporter of the Shuddhi movement, he was slowly veering round to Congress ideal. In 5 September 1934, the police reported that Laxmanayya had been elected a member of the Indore Congress Committee. He set up his residence at Indore engaging himself in such activities as were allied to the Congress movement.

While the picture in Bhopal showed tints of religious, communal, and parochial components, the pattern to which they, in their isolation, seemed to conform was one of a democratic bid to challenge the ruler's autocracy.

In terms of the Civil Disobedience movement lauched in British India only one citizen of Bhopal courted arrest outside Bhopal. He was Rajmal Bherumal convicted in Bombay on 22 March 1932 and sentenced to six month's imprisonment.[11] In the wake to the execution of Bhagat Singh a wave of indignation swept the country. Pictures and portraits of Bhagat Singh were galore in British India, and the Government of India began a witch-hunt for the pictures and ordered their forfeiture.

In May 1932, The Political Agent wrote to the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government asking if Bhagat Singh's pictures were found in the State. The Bhopal police, after a good deal of search found a picture at the shop of one Guttoolal, *a panwallah*, of Chowk Bazaar. The police seized the picture but the Political Secretary reported to the Political Agent that "the shopkeeper Guttoolal thinking that Bhagat Singh had sacrificed his life for the country to get freedom had hung his picture in his *pan* shop".[12]

More cases of Bhagat Singh's pictures being found in Bhopal came to light. The police found the picture of Bhagat Singh on cakes of soap in two shops.

The pictures of Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt were found on coloured anodised meal badges in the shops of Munnalal in Loha Bazaar and Panalal in Jumerati for sale. The police itself bought those badges to prevent their circulation.

A notable event connected with Bhagat Singh came to light at Sehore. A Young man named Prabhu Dayal had manufactured a crude bomb at home which slipped from his hands and exploded. He was himself injured. This happened on 23 August 1932, near the post-office.

The Sehore police searched the house of Prabhu Dayal and found document which showed his connection with the British India agitators. A photograph of Bhagat Singh, with a photograph of Prabhu Dayal pasted at the feet of Bhagat Singh, was also found.[13] Prabhu Dayal was prosecuted under the Explosives Act of Bhopal and was sentenced to three years imprisonment on 9 September 1933.

Looking to these incidents, the Political Agent suggested that the Bhopal government adopt British India's law, the Indian Press Emergency Act of 1931, so that such pictures might be seized as unauthorised. But the Bhopal government chose not to enforce this law in the State and instead resorted to its own law-section 11 of the State Customs Act-an declared such pictures forfeited.

An interesting episode came to light in March 1933. The Viceroy's train was scheduled to pass through Bhopal and the authorities were in jitters. They were keen to spot out communist activities which in their mind were synonymous with the Meerut conspiracy case. The Political Agent was pressing the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government hard to furnish a list of communists to keep a watch on, particularly before the train of the Viceroy passed. Since there were no communists in Bhopal in the real sense, scapegoats were found. A list of some students of the local school and of some shop-keepers was furnished. But most of them were described as having taken part in communal movements and not even remotely connected with the communist movement.[14]

One of them was a poor postal clerk named Mohammed Ahmed. The police description of him is as follows:

> He has not been found to take part openly in any movement. It is quite possible he may be supplying information from the post-office to his confederates in British India. The Government of Bhopal considered his transfer from Bhopal expedient. The State police is keeping him under surveillance.[15]

Mohammed Ahmed came to catch the eye of the Inspector-General of Police, was put under surveillance, and may be he lost his job in the panic which had struck the authorities at Bhopal.

In 1934, again the Hindu question arose with a certain rancour. The Hindu Sabha, Lahore, passed a resolution protesting against conversion to Islam of minor boys and girls in Bhopal. That again irked the Political Agent who wrote to the Political Secretary asking for details on the incidents.

The Nawab of Bhopal, a strong champion of the independence of the State with a separate identity, resented the interference of the Political Agent in the internal matters of his State. He personally dictate the answer to the Political Agent which run thus:

> The Government of Bhopal have no desire to take cognisance of resolutions passed by such organisations in British India. It is of course for the British India to decide what they should do no such resolutions passed by their subjects. If the Government of India decide to take cognisance of such resolutions, a very difficult position may arise which may be interpreted by the Indian States as direct interference in their internal affairs by persons in British India.[17]

However, the reply was never sent in this form but the Secretary to the Law Department wrote to the Political Agent:

> The Department of Law and Justice think that the Political Agent could easily have referred to the Punjab Provincial Hindu Sabha as well to the above communiques.

The Government of Bhopal of course gave its version of these conversions for public consumption outside Bhopal in their communique.

For the first time in Bhopal echoes of the Rashtrya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS) were heard when on 8 June 1934 the Political Agent informed the Political Secretary that organisations such as the RSS and Hanuman Vyayam Mandal were secretly organising rifle clubs.[18] He warned that the Government of Bhopal should on the look-out. But the Political Secretary found no trace of any rifle club in Bhopal.

The Rewa ruler, on recrudescence of the Congress movement in his own State addressed a letter in June 1934 to the Political

Secretary to the Bhopal government, asking the scope of activities allowed to the Congress in Bhopal in view of the Government of India allowing it to function legally. The Political Secretary, replied that Congress centre appears to have been opened in the Bhopal State".[19]

While there was a neither the Congress nor the RSS in Bhopal in 1934, an incident connected with the demolition of a temple within the precincts of the Bhopal railways was tactfully dealt with.[20] It seems the railway authorities wished to demolish a temple to acquire land for extending their own colony. The Political Agent was brought into the picture, but the land belonged to the railways. The Political Secretary and other authorities of the Bhopal government feared trouble in the State if the temple were demolished. The railway agent laid it down as a condition for non-demolition that "nothing was added to the structure and nobody would live in and near the temple". The *Pujari*, who was an Arya Samajist, refused to give such an undertaking. Due to the proximity of a certain locality, it was considered essential that there should be no ringing of bells and nobody should live near the temple.

The Sanatan Dharm Sabha which initiated the protest ultimately came to accept the following terms:

1. The structure and the compound wall will be allowed to remain intact.
2. If these two things are allowed to remain intact there can perhaps be no objection to a single *pujari* being allowed to live therein, and to a single tiny bell being rung therein instead of three bells which are used at present.

The Political Secretary played his par in this settlement so as not to wound the Hindu susceptibility, and at the same time a tiny bell was allowed to be rung in its pathetic little peals so as not to disturb the neighbouring inhabitants.[21]

A similar but a more significant incident took place on 25 March 1936, during the Id-uz-Zuha festival.[22] The Congregation of the Muslims who had come to offer prayers at the mosque swelled and even spilled over the neighbouring buildings. There was a Jain temple in the neighbourhood where at that very time the Jains were offering prayer using their simple tiny musical

instruments. Some Muslims objecting to simultaneous prayers and playing of music in the vicinity of the mosque entered the Jain temple to find out why music was being played when Id prayers were being offered.

This would certainly have led to ugly incidents had not some police officials, State authorities, and Jain leaders intervened and restored peace.

But the Secretary, All-India Digamber Jain Sabha, Seoni, wrote on 17 April 1936 to the Nawab drawing his attention to the miserable conditions in which the Jains lived.

A request for an impartial enquiry into the incident was also made, which was turned down. The usual police inquiry was withdrawn on the joint request of the two communities.

The *Jain Gazette*, a weekly of Seoni, wrote in its editorial:

> Taking advantage of the weakness of the Jain community some so-called Muslim fanatics forces their way into the Jain temple on the excuse of temple music causing disturbance in their Id prayers. Had it not been for Government officers who were liberal minded that situation would have been indeed.[24]

There was a compliment paid to some government officer of Bhopal for their tact in handling the situation.

While the usual religion-communal scene with its strains of "music before the mosque". or "cow slaughter" repeated itself in British Indian cities as well as in Bhopal, the Secretary, Political and Economic Affairs Department of the All-India Congress Committee, addressed a letter to the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government on 20 May 1936. He asked for information regarding constitutional, presidential, and other addresses of movement, and organisation in Bhopal. He wrote:

> We are very keen on the points of view and literature of organization outside the Indian National Congress and related to the Indian question in any of its national and international aspect."[25]

The Secretary of the AICC, Political and Economic Affairs Department at the time was Dr. K.M. Ashraf, who later became a communist leader.

On receipt of this letter which sought information of use to public at large, the Political Secretary noted on the file: "Just ignore".[25]

In 1937, Bhopal witnessed a highly inflammable event which had its echoes in many parts of India. One Miss Brown, an Anglo-Indian Head mistress of Sultania Girls High School, was murdered by a Muslim bigot—the cause of it was the indiscretion shown by Miss Brown in sorting out unwarranted books from the school library which she was keen to rearrange. Being ignorant of Urdu and Persian, she could not decide with any finality whether some books, one of which was the *Quran*, were wanted in the school library; out of her ignorance she consigned the sacred books to the rubbish heap which was dumped out of the school building. The news reached the two and there was considerable commotion among the Muslim population. To check the facts the Education Department held an inquiry and accepted Miss Brown's version.[27]

But by August 1937 the ripple of agitation threatened to be an uproarious wave. People started to hold meetings of protest and clamoured for action against Miss Brown. The government got alarmed, and fresh evidence began to be brought forward. Some people said that they saw the sweeper throwing away the sacred books including the *Quran* protested to Miss Brown to stop it. But the just ignored the protest.

It is at this juncture of government inquiry that a fanatic named Banne Khan assaulted Miss Brown. The headmistress was on her way to attend a meeting when Banne Khan came from behind and stabbed her in her back, neck, and chest. She succumbed to the murderous assault on the spot.

Banne Khan was tried by the sessions court and sentenced to death. The Government of Bhopal issued immediately a communique expressing deep sympathies with the bereaved family and condemned the murder of Miss Brown.

The *Akhlaq*, a newspaper of Agra, published a "Ghazi Banne Khan special number" to eulogise the "martyrdom" of Banne Khan, but the Government of Bhopal promptly banned the import of the special number under the Bhopal Customs Act.[28] Thus ended a tragic story loaded with suspense.

As these religious denominational events smacking more of bigotry than of truly religious spirit continued unabated, they showed how the subjects suffered. At the same time, the disabilities under which the subjects continued to suffer coloured the popular movements which were politico-economic in character. The government of India's intelligence department sent the news to the Bhopal government that a relation of Abdul Gaffar Khan was getting involved in religion-political troubles at Bhopal. The reference was to Abdul Hannan Khan who described himself as the relation of the "Frontier Gandhi" and stayed at Dhar on 11 January 1938 and mixed with people who carried on an agitation on the Bhoj-shala-kamal Maula question.[29] The Government of Bhopal took notice of this extra-territorial intrusion.

The Hindu Sabha, which by now had in its the fold Lal Singh, Chaturnarain Malviya, Udho Das Mehta, Bhoiro Prasad, Dr. Jamuna Prasad Mukhariya, and Laxmi Narain Sharma, was aware of the situation in Bhopal and planned to launch agitation to secure some rights and a just share in the services.

A starred political suspect named Vinayak Narain Lokras of Saugar was reported missing in July 1936 by the police which believed that he was doing underground work in Nagpur, Kanpur and Bhopal.[30]

The Hindu Mahasabha agitation did make some progress in fighting for civil liberties. In 1937, the Hindu Sabha held a conference on which section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code was clamped down. Despite the ban, the conference was sought to be held which led to the arrest of Chaturnarain Malviya, Undho Das Mehta, Namuna Prasad Mukhariya, and others. Their contention was that freedom of speech and assembly was their civil right.

Now, reverting to the Anjuman Khuddam-e-Watan movement against the background of suppression of its activities and intervention of its leaders we find a similar fate befalling the Hindu Mahasabha. The reign of terror and the pall of suspicion soon numberd it into a state of bewilderment.

One of the political prisoners, Bhagwandas Rathi, died at Bhopal soon after his release from jail. The All-India States People's

Conference wrote on 25 August 1937 to the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government:

> Death of the Bhagwandas Rathi soon after his release from Bhopal jail is shocking. He was in a very precarious condition when he was released. There were reports to the effect that the treatment meted out to him in jail was to a great extent responsible for the breakdown of Rathi's health.[31]

The letter, at the same time, suggested that on the analogy of Mysore and other progressive State where the President of the All-India States Peoples Conference was allowed all facilities to tour the State, the Bhopal government also might allow a tour of the President of the Conference in the State.

The Bhopal government issued a communique explaining away the death of the Bhagwandas Rathi, and the question of allowing the President of the All-India State People's Conference touring the State it kept silent.

The All-India States People's Conference, which met in Bombay in June 1938, drafted a report on the activities in the Indian States. The report contained a reference to the Bhopal workers of the conference. The extract of the report was forwarded in a secret letter by the Political Agent to the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government. It said:

> Bhopal workers have started a "States People's Association" and have agreed to certain alterations in its constitution so as to bring it in line with our conference. We have impressed upon the active members, both Hindus and Muslims, the necessity of developing purely political work on entirely non-communal lines. We are hopeful of the fruitfulness of our mission to Bhopal from what we saw there.[32]

Jainarain Vyas and Krishna Kant were concentrating their efforts on the Conference activities in the Rajputana and Central India States.

Now, being victims of repression of the Bhopal government which fell with equal severity on the Anjuman Khuddam-e-Watan and the Hindu Sabha, the leaders of the two parties decided to sink their differences and present a united front to the autocratic regime. It was a turning point to the politics of Bhopal. It was in 1938 that the leaders of the two organizations, Shakir Ali Khan and Tarzi

Mashriqui on the one hand, and Lal Singh, Chaturnarain Malviya. and Abdul Quddus Sehvai on the other, sank their differences and established the Praja Mandal.

Prior to the emergence of the Praja Mandal as a political force, an event of great significance took place in Bhopal in 1938. On 3 February 1938, a Basant Panchami procession was taken out. On the close of the procession, Chaturanarain Malviya informed those present that V. D. Savarkar, the newly elected President of the Hindu Mahasabha, would pass through Bhopal that evening on his way to Delhi. About 500 people went to the railway station to see Savarkar. An 'anathalaya' band was in attendance. Savarkar was garlanded and many people were introduced to him by Lal Singh. Prominent among those who welcomed Savarkar were Chaturnarain Malviya, Dr. Jamuna Prasad Mukhariya, Narain Das, Bajaj, and Laxmi Narain Sharma. These people along with others invited Savarkar to Bhopal to support the Hindu Sabha. Chaturnarain Malviya accompanied Savarkar up to Bhilsa (now Vidisha).[33]

The Bhopal government made pitiful attempts to see that not many person would go to see Savarkar and so insisted that he station-master should ask for platform tickets from those meeting Savarkar. However, this proved of no avail.

Subsequently, when the Khuddam-e-Watan and the Hindu Sabha merged in 1938, to form the Praja mandal, the unity was not a cemented bond. Each looked upon the other with suspicion. It was only time and important events that made the Praja Mandal really united force.

In January 1938, the police suspected Mehdi Ali Khan, a brother of Shakir Ali Khan, to be an associated of the terrorists accused in the Meerut conspiracy case.[34] Mehdi Ali Khan developed communistic tendencies while he was studying in Calcutta. According to some sources, he was trying to establish a link between Shakir Ali Khan and the accused persons in the Meerut conspiracy case.

At the same time, the Law Department of the government of Bhopal in a communication of the Political Department said that Skakir Ali Khan was trying to get into the Congress—fold but had so far not succeeded.

In 1939, Shakir All Khan and Chaturnarain Malviya joined Gandhi Ashram at Sevagram, but left it on account of the rigours of food restrictions and other forms of discipline.

As soon as the Second World War broke out on 16 September 1939, the Nawab addressed a meeting of the State officers. The strain of the address was pan-Islamic, and even foreshadowed that Mohammad Ali Jinnah was to say later. He emphatically declared that no constitution should be forced on nine crores of Muslims of India who were prepared to make all sacrifices in the cause of the British Government and hoped that all Muslim countries would join the Allies in fighting Hitlerism.[35] Once again, at a crucial moment in history, the Nawab of Bhopal declared his allegiance to British imperialism, as his predecessors did earlier.

In 1940, Hamid Quraishi, Shakir Ali Khan and Chaturnarain Malviya were arrested in connection with an agitation. The Praja Mandal by now had a fairly good organisational base and was ready to contest elections to the Legislative Council due in 1940. In the Legislative Council the discussion on a resolution to support the British government in the second world war was opposed by Hamid Quraishi. He was arrested along with Chaturnarain Malviya and both were sentenced to imprisonment for two and half years.[36]

On 21 and 22 April 1940, the Central India States People's Conference held the session at Khandwa under the presidentship of Acharya Narenda Deva. Delegates from important places such as Ujjain, Indore, Ratlam attended the session, but none from Bhopal.[47] Acharya Narendra Deva advised the State People's Conference workers to follow the programme of the Provincial Congress Committees in British India, to enrol active and passive Satyagrahis, and to hold Satyagrahis' training camps of only such persons as subscribed to Gandhiji's programme, and lastly to wait for the signal from British India.

In September 1940, the Political Agent wrote to the Political Secretary to the Government of Bhopal on the dangers of the impending Civil Disobedience movement:

> I am instructed to say that action with a view to immobilisation and seizure of any Congress funds which may be lodged in banks or with

> other persons in State territory is considered to be an essential immediate step to counter the movement if Civil Disobedience is started.[38]

The Political Secretary wrote to the Political Agent on 21 December, 1940:

> Government of Bhopal will be most happy to cooperate to the fullest extent possible in measures that it may become necessary to adopt in connection with Civil Disobedience movement.
>
> Although from inquiries so far made it appears that no Congress funds are lodged in banks or with other persons in the State, the Government of Bhopal propose to issue an ordinance on the lines mutantis mutandis of the British Indian ordinance.[39]

The students of Bhopal was got enthusiastic about the youth movement in the country elsewhere. Balram Singh, Secretary, Provincial Students' Federation, Lucknow, wrote to Ahasan Ali, Secretary, Bhopal Student's Union on 23 July, 1941:

> It is a matter of intense pleasure that students of Bhopal are organising themselves. Yes, affiliation is possible with the Province Student's Federation. Please send a lit of present office-bearers.[40]

Earlier, Yusuf Meher Ali, a Bombay socialist leader, left Bombay for Bhopal on 3 May 1940 en route to Shujalpur to inaugurate the second Shujalpur District Political Conference.

At the station, the workers of the Bhopal State People's Conference met Yusuf Meher Ali, who was accompanied by Hairbahu Upadhyaya, and gave the former an account of the Bhopal affairs. Yusuf Meher Ali requested the Bhopal government, through Quddus Sehvai, M. L. C., to permit him and Upadhyaya to meet Shakir Ali Khan, who was in internment in Sehore jail. The application as refused on the ground that the government did not approve of outsiders interviewing Shakir Ali Khan on his taking any part in politics. This information was transmitted by the I. G. of Police to Shakir Ali Khan.

Chaturnarian Malviya who until the formation of the Praja Mandal in 1938 was a leader of Hindu Mahasabha got elected as an independent member on the support of the Hindu Sabha to the State Legislative Council in 1937. He continued to be a member of the Council till 1940 and played an important role as a legislator.

In the elections held in 1940, the newly formed Praja Mandal, affiliated to the All-India State People's Conference, entered the fray. It won three seats out to the four it contested. The successful Praja Mandal candidates were Abu Sayid Razmi, Quddus, and Mohammed Hasan. A People's front representing all communities was formed.

The political after-effect of the merger of the Hindu Sabha and the Anuman Khuddam-e-Watan was that the Sabha vanished as a political entity and the leaders of the Hindu Sabha who contained their loyalty to it to the end were Udho Das Mehta, Bhairo Prasad, and Dr. Jamuna Prasad Mukhariya.

Within the Praja Mandal's fold came the former leaders of the Hindu Sabha, Lal Singh and Chaturnarain Malviya, and together with Shakir Ali Khan, Tarzi Mashriqi of the Anjuman Khuddam-e-Watan, they began activities under the general direction of the All-India States People's Conference. The historical forces unleashed anti-imperialist trends in Bhopal's politics publishing ever more the feudal power to seek shelter with the British.

The Hindu Sabha continued its activities with leaders such as Udho Das Mehta, Bhairo Prasad, and Dr. Jamuna Prasad Mukhariya under the general direction of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha.

But the aim of both these organisations was to rid the administration of its feudal elements. The Praja Mandal organised its activities in order to secure greater scope for civil liberties and advanced schemes of economic reform. The Hindu Sabha on the other hand became the platform of the section of the community which lived under severe disabilities.

A significant interlude was the attitude of the Bhopal government towards the Hyderabad satyagraha launched in the territory of the Nizam. In March 1939, the Hindu Sabha wanted to hold a meeting in support of Hyderabad satyagraha, and pat came the ban on the meting when the District Magistrate, Bhopal, refused permission to hold it. The Nizam's government wrote a letter of appreciation through its constitutional affairs secretariat on 14 March 1939:

> His Exalted Highness the Nizam's government nas nad occasion to read in the press that the District Magistrate of Bhopal refused permission for

a meeting which was to have been held by Hindu Mahasabha regarding Hyderabad satyagraha. His exalted Highness greatly appreciates this gesture of neighbourlines towards a friendly state and I am desired to request you to place his appreciation before His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal.[41]

The Nawab reciprocated the warmth of the letter of appreciation with an overflowing sentiment of cordiality which recalled the ancient ties between the two States. The Government of Bhopal's letter of 25 April 1939 reads:

I have it in command to say that in view no less of cordial relations subsisting between the two Governments than of intimacy between the two houses, Bhopal Government must necessarily do all they can to ease the situation in Hyderabad.[42]

History bore but the truth of this assertion. Bhopal and Hyderabad both joined hands to stall, though unsuccessfully, India's independence in 1947.

The letter proceeded to refer to the difficult times which, enjoining caution, had tied their hands.

The years 1939, 1940 and 1941 presented the scene of great turmoil and stir in the Indian States. What with the Rajkot problem and the Hyderabad satyagraha or the repression let loose in Jaipur, Bikaner, and Bhopal, the British India government saw red in the situation. The Viceroy undertook a tour of the States and persuaded the princes to announce reforms. On 9 February 1939 Gandhiji wrote in the *Harijan:*

The more I think of what is happening in the States in India, I see nothing but a dark future for this unhappy land, if the paramount power remains a helpless witness of the tragedy that is being enacted in princely India. The people of the States may to be able to treat the people from the State other than their own or those from British India as foreigners. There is sufficient awakening among the people of the State to withstand the pressure even from concerted unity among the princes.

Before the formation of the Praja Mandal in Bhopal in 1938, the Hindu Sabha had defied section 144 and held a meeting to register the people's sovereign right to freedom of speech and assembly. Many persons were then arrested for the sake of civil

Liberties including Chaturnarian Malviya, Lal Singh, Bhairo Prasad, Udho Das Mehta, and Dr. Jamuna Prasad Mukhariya.

After its formation in 1938, the Praj Mandal got itself affiliated to the All-India States Peoples Conference. The latter held its session in 1939 at Ludhina which was attended by Shakir Ali Khan. the Government of Bhopal was conscious of the seriousness of the situation in the State caused by people's unrest to which different political parties contributed significantly. According to the I. G. of Police (the Bhopal Government having held consultation on the subject with the Political Agent), the political subjects of the State were classified into two categories:

> *One*, the one-tarred political suspects on whom police surveillance was to be kept in central India alone.
>
> *Two*, the two-starred suspects on whom police surveillance was to be kept throughout India.[43]

To the first category belonged Dr. Jamuna Prasad Mukhariya and Lal Singh. To the second category belonged Abdul Quddus Sehvai, Chaturnarain Malviya, and Shakir Ali Khan.

Dr. Jamuna Prasad Mukhariya was described in police reports as a an anti-Muslim agitator who was anxious to see communal disturbances in Muslim States. Lal Singh was no longer now a "communal leader". After he joined the States People's Conference, he underwent change so far as his political convictions were concerned.

Shakir Ali Khan had been described in the police reports of 1937-38 as one anxious to cultivate the friendship of Abul Kalam Azad and Hasrat Mohani on whom he called at Calcutta. On the other hand he was shown associating himself with communist activities. He was appointed President of the Praja Mandal, but soon resigned; then Chaturnarain Malviya became the President. He took active part in the labour movement and was interned for eight months. On release, he resumed his activities and was prosecuted under the Defence of India Rules and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment in 1940.

Interestingly, the police report of this period (1939-40) alleged that Chaturnarain Malviya had joined the Communist Party of

Bengal along with Mehdi Ali Khan. Abdul Qudus Sehvai was described by the police as an anti-State agitator and was acquainted with the accused of the Meerut conspiracy case.

The Second World War in 1940 was a year old. The British government was anxious to know the position of the armed forces in different Indian States in case of civil disturbances or an open revolt in India.[44] Bhopal government reported to the Government of India that on 31 December 1939, the forces in the Bhopal State comprised as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Infantry | 1243 |
| Guns | 19 |
| Local guns | 21 |

Earlier, the Government of India had decided on appointing liaison officers attached to each of the British defence forces deployed to work in association with the State's forces. This was devised with a view to taking a concerted action should open rebellion break out in the Indian States. The appointment of liaison officers was a unilateral decision of the Government of India and the Nawab of Bhopal, as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, recorded his mild protest against the procedure adopted. The Nawab was of the view that the whole matter should have been placed before the Chamber of Princes and then a decision made.

In December 1941, after Jawaharlal Nehru had been released from prison, Kanhalyalal of the All-India States People conference wrote him a letter giving vivid details of repression the princes in central India had let loose on their people.[45]

In the letter dated 8 December 1941, Kanhayalal stated that in Ratlam, the Praja Mandal leaders were wrongly implicated in a conspiracy case and were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment ranging from 7 to 11 years. Beharilal Vyas and Gafoor Khan fell ill and died after the judgement.

In Jhabuwa, said the letter, three was indiscriminate firing on a peaceful and unarmed group of Bhil peasants of Ratlam and Sailana.

In Indore, five workers died in police firing. Jawaharlal Nehru had deputed Kachru to report on the situation obtaining in the Indian

States. The report revealed the designs of the Indore ruler towards the Praja Mandal and the mill workers.

Even in a tiny State as Maihar in Central India the government repressions took a toll of two lives.

The letter went on to say: "In Bhopal almost all our workers are still in jails and repression continues as usual".

While the story of repression and terror tarnished the political landscape of Bhopal, a gesture on the part of the ruler of Bhopal, however small and unimportant it might be, brought a touch of grace.

Dr. Zakir Husain, Principal of Jamia Millia, Delhi, requested the Bhopal government to allow his college to use as playground the plot of land in Okhla which belonged to the Bhopal government.[46] The Nawab, after consulting the Government of India, allowed Dr. Zakir Husain to use field as a playground initially for two years: "The Govenment of Bhopal are disposed to consider this request favourably in view of their interest in the institution".

In 1940, the Communist Party of India had not yet adopted the "People's war" slogan.[47] A secret circular issued by the Communist Party of India asked its workers to abandon open hostility to Britain's war efforts in India, but, instead, to carry on a whispering campaign against "war committees" and "defence loans". The whispering campaign was to aim at convincing the people that Britain would lose the war. Such secret circulars were in evidence in Bhopal as well. The Political Agent in his letter dated 4 September 1940 asked the Political Member (minister) to counter such propaganda.

By 1941 most of the active political workers of Bhopal were imprisoned on one charge or the other. In 1940, Hamid Quraishi and Chaturnarain Malviya were already arrested together with Shakir Ali Khan. They were sentenced to two and half years each.

By the time the Indian National Congress started the Quit India movement in August 1942, the Bhopal govenment had already put many prominent workers behind bars. The movement, however, claimed Shakir Ali Khan and Govind Prasad Shrivastava as victims. They were detained under the Defence of Indian Rules.

In 1941, the anti-British radio propaganda from Berlin caused considerable anxiety to the Resident for Central India. The Indore State promulgated on ordinance banning listening to German broadcasts and carried penalties Secretary to the Bhopal government to emulate the example of Indore and ban listening to Berlin broadcasts.[48] The opinion of the Inspector-General of Police of Bhopal was sought, who though it futile to promulgate an ordinance on the lines of Indore:

> We profess to despise German method of suppressing all informations other than their own by inflicting heavy punishment on anybody listening to a foreign broadcast. It seems to me that the bill in question is a mild version of the German method which we ought not to adopt.

Brave words, indeed coming as they did from the pen of the Inspector-General of Police. The Department of Law and Justice endorsed the view of the I. G. of Police.

However, the Government of India insisted that the Indian States act on the press note issued by the Home Department setting forth in detail how to counter German propaganda pointing out the dangers inherent in the dissemination of foreign propaganda during the war. Listening to Berlin broadcasts was banned.

Once again the views of the Political Agent were thought unnecessary by the Political Secretary of the Bhopal government when the former asked the State to prohibit the publication of the resolutions of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress. The Political Secretary advised the Nawab against any such ban as no paper in the State published them.[49] The Nawab agreed with the Department of Law and Justice.

But the Political Agent once again, on 6 June 1942 asked the Bhopal government to issue orders under the State's version of the Defence of India Rules if considered necessary.

On 8 August 1942 the Political Agent wrote to the Political Member to invoke Rule 41 (i) of the Defence of India Rules on the printing and publishing of news relating to the Quit India movement sanctioned by the A.I.C.C.

The Political Department of the Bhopal government had no alternative but to carryout the wishes of the Government of India for necessary action.

Now that the Quit India movement of August 1942 was in full swing all over India, among the States of the Central India Indore became the rallying point of the struggle. The Indore Praja Mandal gave three days' ultimatum to the Maharaja to sever connection with the British government. The Indore darbar declare the Praja Mandal as an unlawful association. Hundreds of Praja Mandal leaders were arrested there were instances of lathi charges, firing, brutal assaults on the struggling masses of Indore. The textile workers also went on strike for three weeks.

While the Quit India movement was surging forward,the Resident of Central India Agency at Indore thought it fit to address the people. The first audience he chose to address on 22 August 1942 was of the clerks of the Residency. With a pathetic flourish of phrases he said:

> Have the European Officers you known usually been men of high ideals, ability and example? Have you known any one of them to be monsters of cruelty, corruption or vice? Have not some of them been your best friends? I mean close and intimate private friends. Should you let your *loafers* and schoolboys shout at them and insult them as they hand on their great achievements to your brothers?

The disturbances at Indore have, however, received honourable mention in the Japanese press.

In Bhopal,the President of the Praja Mandal, Chaturnarain Malviya, along with Hamid Quraishi, left Bhopal to set up the headquarters of their activities at Indore and later a Itarsi.

As the Quit India movement continued in varying degrees of intensity in the Indian States and British India, the Government of Bhopal was asked by the Political Agent whether the State authorities had taken any precautions against the agiators using uniform or clothing resembling the police. Armstrong, the Inspector-General of Police, Bhopal, reported that only the members of the Khaksar organisation in the State wore uniforms resembling the military or the police, that they were not subversive elements, and that, therefore, he did not consider any prohibitory order on their wearing uniforms necessary.

Now, another piquant situation arose as a result of a secret Radio station from Germany making Hindusthani broadcasts in the name of Azad Hindusthan Radio. The I. G. of Police reported hat those broadcasts were having a bad influence on the people. The Home Department, Government of India, then circulated a general note on "culture" calculated to counteract the German radio propaganda. The I. G. of Police now found that the people had ceased to take any interest in those anti-British broadcasts because they were "merely vulgar personal attacks rather than news".

The starting of a weekly in Hindi, *Kisan* from Ichchawar in 1939 was followed by a new organisation, called Bhopal State Kisan Sewa Sangh, founded by Lal Singh. The change in the political views of Lal Singh resulted from his joining the Praja Mandal in 1938. Now his attention was diverted to the problems of the peasantry and he began to quote Vinoba Bhave and Gandhiji in the *Kisan*.

On 19 June 1943, the Political Agent asked the Nawab to report if there were any RSS activities noticed in Bhopal. His letter was couched in a rather imperious tone. He said:

> I am sure Your Highness will agree that the growth in state territory of a movement potentially dangerous to the whole of India is undesirable, and if the reports so far received by the Government of India are to be believed,it would seem that it may be necessary to consider taking steps against this danger.
>
> I have, therefore, been asked to warn your Highness against giving any encouragement to the Sangh or patronising its activities, should this organisation show itself within your Highness's territory.

The Nawab was touched to the quick at the mention of "warning"in the letter, and he replied in rather stern terms:

> As regards the warning in the last para of your letter I can only say that I cannot believe that I can be suspected of giving encouragement to or extending my patronage to such as the Sangh.

Earlier, the Civil Defence Department of Bhopal had reported on 30 June 1943 that "there does not exist any branch of the RSS in this state".

> As regards the Muslim League in Bhopal, the Political Member on 30 June 1943 that "there does not exist any branch of the RSS in this state".[50]

As regards the Muslim League in Bhopal, the Political Member of the State wrote to the Political Agent on 12 February 1944:

> No activity whatsoever on the part of the Muslim League branch in Bhopal was observed in Bhopal during the year. It is absolutely inactive and its members severed themselves from the Muslim League, and therefore there are no regular members or office-bearers.[51]

But it was different with the Khaksar organisation. Founded by Allama Mashriqui, it had become the object of suspicion by the Government of India. Its volunteers paraded in semi-military uniforms and only Muslims owing allegiance to Allama could join it. The government had once imposed a ban on it but was lifted during the war.

Once again, in 1943, the Khaksars started holding their camps. They used to carry *Belchas* and performed drills. The Government of India once more thought of imposing a ban on it. It altered all the provincial governments and the Indian States.

The Political Agent wrote to the Political Member of Bhopal on 12 June 1943:

> Reports from several provincial Governments suggest that the activities of the Khaksar organisation are tending to an increasing extent to go beyond the conditions which were imposed when the ban on the organisation was lifted....I should be glad to know for the information of the Government of India how the Khaksar position is regarded in the Bhopal State and what action, if any, the Bhopal Government have taken or propose to take.[52]

The Political Agent wrote to the Political Secretary to the Bhopal Government on 18 March 1944:

It is understood that there is to be a camp of Central India Khaksars in Bhopal shortly and that about 25 local Khaksars of Indore will attend it.

The I. G. of Police, Bhopal State, wrote in reply on 20 March 1944:

> I have no information of the Khaksar camp in Bhopal in the near future. Probably your information refers to a camp of the Khaksars which was held on 8, 9 and 10 March 1944. It was attended by 30 Khaksars including 13 from outside of which 4 or 5 had come from Indore.

This innocent-looking report of the I. G. of Police was contradicted by the Political Agent who wrote to the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government quoting from a censored letter. The letter in question reads at the end (dated 14 March 1944):

> Bhopal is the only place in C.P., nay, in whole of India where the Khaksars command dominating influence. But even at this place, the War has had its effect.

The Political Agent pressed for a comment on this secret letter. The I. G of Police, to save his face, reiterated that the local Khaksars had given no trouble in the past; however, he assured that a careful watch was being kept on the local Khaksars and prompt action would be taken, should any further embarrassing activities be indulged in by the organisation and that the Bhopal government did not anticipate any trouble from them.

All this protracted correspondence, with this secret letter thrown in, left no one in any doubt that the Bhopal had been a strong bastion of the Khaksars.

Now, the Government of India published a pamphlet on the Quit India movement which it called "The Congress responsibility for 1942-43 disturbances".[54] Each State was asked to publicise it to the widest extent possible. The Government of Bhopal ordered on 14 June 1943 its copies for the widest circulation in the State: 395 copies in Urdu, 275 copies in Hindi, and 53 copies in English. The National War Front which functioned in Bhopal as well became the chief instrument of propagating the pamphlet.

In 1944 the Indian States were urged to take similar action against the following organisation under their counterpart of the Defence of India Rules:

1. Indian National Congress.
2. All India Muslim League.

3. All India Hindu Mahasabha.

4. The RSS.

5. Anjumane Khaksars.

It is true that the Bhopal government had reported to the political Agent that the RSS had no existence in Bhopal that the Khaksars were an innocuous organisation, and that the Muslim League had gone defunct in Bhopal. But the Political Agent made persistent inquiries in January 1946 as to the personnel and activities of the Muslim League. The Bhopal government had to declare the names of the office-bearers of the Muslim League, in both Bhopal and Sehore.[56] The President of the Muslim League was Azim Ali, and the Secretary, Mohammed Yakub; the Vice-President and their Treasurer being Nasiruddin and Tufail Ahmed respectively. In Sehore, Khan Bahadur Diwan S. Alikhan was the President.

The Political Agent further sought information on the "political organisation formed on military lines".[57] The Bhopal government gave the following particulars:

1. *Rashtriya Seva Sangh:* About 50 members, youths below 20 years; activities: held three annual meetings and urged youths to get freedom for India for Hindus. Arms; lathis; training; drill and lathi proficiency.
2. *Khaksars:* About 50 men, hold parades; show anti-Muslim League tendency; inclined to support the State People's Conference; arms; *belchas;* hold training in drills.
3. *Ex-I. N. A. Personnel:* Nil.

The Bhopal police did not notice any subversive activities indulged in by the two organisations.

As the war showed signs of drawing to a close, the question of India's independence seemed no longer a dream. The Government of India was anxious to watch the strategies of different political parties, specially in view of the part played by the Indian National Army which had sown the seeds of disaffection among the Indian personnel of the defence forces.

The *Nadeem,* which had by now begun to appear as a daily, got its renewal of registration at the initiative of the Political Secretary

to the Bhopal Government. It should be noted that the Nawab of Bhopal succeeded in getting the approval of the Political Department of the Government of India of naming his rule as "Government of Bhopal" (see Home Ministry file index).

It focused public attention on 18 January 1946, when it complained that the postmaster of Bhopal had refused to accept money orders written in Urdu. At the intervention of the authorities an amicable settlement was reached, and no bitterness survived the incident.

Later, 1946, the Government of India wished to convene a conference with a view to discussing the matter of determining how far and to what extent the Indian states' armed forces were required for service on the field.

The intention of the Government of India seemed to be to require the Indian States to pay cash contributions to the Government of India in return for the protection afforded to them.[58] The ruler of Bhopal thought differently on the subject. The Government of Bhopal prepared a memorandum somewhat on these lines: That the Treaty of Raisen of 1818 was signed with the clear aim of maintaining an army called the Bhopal contingent mainly to serve the British when a situation arose which warranted their assistance to the British power in India. But this was to between the British rulers expressly asked that the contingent be sent for their use. That being the case, the question of the Bhopal government paying cash contribution as a "tribute" did not arise; it might be that other State stood in such relationship with the British government as envisaged the payment of a "tribute" by them to the Government of India, but the Bhopai Government would not pay a tribute in terms of the Treaty of Raisen.

The Nawab of Bhopal developed an approach which seemed to place Bhopal on a plane almost of equality with the Government of India subject to the overall British paramountcy. Ipso facto, the idea grew that with the lapse of British paramountcy, the Bhopal government would be considered sovereign in its own right. It is the germ of this line of thinking that led later to considerable tension in the relationship between the successors Government of India and Bhopal. That intransigence led to a movement called the "merge movement" in 1948.

The city of Bhopal witnessed, on 12 April 1946, an event which reflected the murky paths and bypaths into which the political life of the State was drifting.[59] A Muslim procession was taken out which ended in rioting, loot, and arson; in plan terms, it was a "communal riot" in which the Hindus suffered losses.

Immediately, on 13 April 1946, a meeting of high officers and ministers was held and the Nawab presided. The meeting was convinced of the gravity of the situation. It deliberated whether the procession which culminated in riot could have been dispersed by the police. It was argued that the police force was inadequate to meet the situation. The meeting passed a resolution authorising the I. G. of Police to recruit 100 special constables drawn from both the communities.

Compensation was also paid to the riot victims as it was estimated by the government that the Hindus suffered a total loss of Rs. 8, 749. According to one version, the Khaksars who had now turned into Muslim National Guard participated actively in the riots and demolished some temples. The Government of Bhopal immediately paid compensation for those losses.

While Bhopal witnessed a communal riot in April 1946, a secret extract from the Indore police report conveyed to the Political Secretary to the Bhopal government spoke of a meeting of the Praja Mandal held on 6 December 1946 at Khajuri Bagh, Indore.[60] At the meeting Shakir Ali Khan was reported to have said:

> Imperialism is on its last legs. I now envisage complete freedom for the State's people. About Pakistan, the best course is for both parties to it together and find its solution instead of inviting a third party. The communal riots are prominently featured in the press while the peaceful places like Indore are not mentioned.

The year 1946 saw Bhopal in the grip of political tension. The stories which travelled from British India about widespread communal riots in most of the provinces created a difficult situation for the Bhopal administration.

That year is important also because two leaders of the and Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhabhai Patel, visited Bhopal. while the former talked over matters regarding the formation of a

federation with the Nawab, the latter received a deputation of the citizens of Bhopal who wished to ventilate their grievances.

## REFERENCES

1. The authors conversation with Shakir Ali Khan.
2. File No. 21, B. No. 218, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. File No. 81, B. No. 176, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
12. File No. 25, B. No. 175, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
13. *Ibid.*
14. File No. 297. B. No. 177, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
15. *Ibid.*
16. File No. 260, B. No.193, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
17. *Ibid.*
18. File Number 328, B. Number 190, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
19. File Number 330, B. Number 190, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
20. File Number 68, B. Number 203 Bhopal State P. D. Files.
21. *Ibid.*
22. File Number 46, B. Number 218, Bhopal State P. D. files.
23. *Ibid.*
24. File Number 46, B. Number 218, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
25. File Number 26, B. Number 218, Bhopal State P. D. files.
26. *Ibid.*
27. File Number 174, B. Number 232, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
28. File Number 177, B. Number 232, Bhopal State P. D. Files.
29. File Number 176, B. Number 232 (1937), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
30. File Number 33, B. Number 218 (1936), Bhopal State P. D. Files.

31. File Number 18, B. Number 242 (1937), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
32. File Number 18, B. Number 242 (1937) Bhopal State P. D. files.
33. File Number 15, B. Number 242 (1938), Bhopal State P. D. Files
34. File Number 9, B. Number 242 (1938), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
35. File Number 288, b. Number 269 (1939-40), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
36. File Number 21, B. Number 289 (1941), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
37. File Number 10, B. Number 270 (1940), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
38. File Number 21, B. Number 270 (1940), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
39. File Number 16, B. Number 270 (1940), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
40. File Number 11, B. Number 270 (1940), Bhopal State P. D. files.
41. File Number 14, B. Number 267 (1939.40), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
42. *Ibid.*
43. File Number 21, B. Number 289 (1941), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
44. File Number 8, B. Number 267 (1937-40), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
45. File Number 27, B. Number 287 (1941), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
46. File Number 245, B. Number 281 (1940), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
47. File Number 399, B. Number 276 (1940), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
48. File Number 399, B. Number 294 (1941), Bhopal State P. D. files
49. File Number 719, B. Number 296 (1941), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
50. File Number 35, B. Number 328 (1944), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
51. File Number 47, B. Number 328 (1944), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
52. File Number 34, B. Number 328 (1944), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
53. File Number 34, B. Number 328 (1944), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
54. File Number 20, B. Number 328 (1944), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
55. File Number 19, B. Number 342 (1944), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
56. File Number 24, B. Number 342 (1944), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
57. File Number 25, B. Number 342 (1944), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
58. File Number 135, B. Number 343 (1945), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
59. File number 396, B. Number 372 (1946), Bhopal State P. D. Files.
60. File Number 396, B. Number 372 (1946), Bhopal State P. D. files.

## OTHER REFERENCES

1. A biography of Mauli Baraktullah in Urdu.
2. 'Iftikharul Mulk an official biography of Nawab Hamidulla Khan (Published by Bhopal Government

3. 'Young India" Edited by M. K. Gandhi (1924).

4 Records in the National Archives, Bhopal special reference to files of Political Department, Bhopal State.

5. *Persons Interviewed:*

   1 The late Shri Shakir Ali Khan.

   2. The late Shri Shivnarain Vaidya.

   3. Dr. Jamna Prasad.

   4. Shri Udho Das Mehta.

   5. Shri Umrao Singh, ex-Minister.

# Appendices

## THE DEMAND OF BHOPAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE END THE PRESENT BUREAUCRATIC RULE

The Bhopal Congress passed the following resolutations unanimously.

1. Although Haripura Congress in its well-known resolutions forbade activities inside the princely states which might lead to conflict between the ruler and his subjects, nevertheless that does not imply a complete abstinence by the Congress Committee and the subject of princely State from adopting programmes to protect their fundamental rights and from awakening national consciousness. The All India Congress Committee and its chief leaders are of the definite view that the Congress Committee in such states should strive to achieve economic, moral and cultural reforms. In these circumstances the Bhopal Congress Committee is of the definite opinion that the Bhopal Administration has put obstacles in the path of people's political, economic and moral uplift. Therefore, the Congress Committee respectfully appeals to Nawab Sahib to kindly introduce responsible Government in the State and to end the bureaucratic rule. And to achieve it, he is further requested to create a constituent assembly in the State in which elected members should function. The Bhopal Congress Committee regrets that the aspirations of the people of the State are being crushed whereas in the rest

of the country thee is an unprecendented political awakening. The demand for a responsible Government in the State is being persistently ignored. The Committee has the firm faith in the political forsightedness of the present Nawab Sahib who was earned a national recognition for his political sagacity and is a leader of the princes. He is requested to accept the demand for a responsible Government in the state and thus show his generosity.

2. The Bhopal Congress Committee wishes to make it clear that only elected representatives of Bhopal State can join the constituent Assembly of India. If the ruler tries to foist on the Constituent Assembly such members as are not representatives of the people, the Bhopal Congress Committee will resist the attempt.

3. In the opinion of the Bhopal Congress Committee the announcement by the ruler of 'Gram Sabhas' in Tehsil and districts is thoroughly unsatisfactory and unconvincing. These nominal reforms are a farce which the administration enacts every year. The Congress Committee deems it its duty to declare that such farcical reforms are no remedy of the ills of the downtrodden people of the States.

Secretary

Congress Committee, Bhopal.

## AGREEMENT OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

WE THE MEMBERS of the Negotiating Committee appointed by the Bhopal State People's Conference, do hereby agree that His Highness and his Government will have the full support and cooperation of the State People's Conference in regard to the following questions which were discussed between His Highness and the Negotiating Committee of the States People's Conference and which have been accepted by the Negotiating Committee of the States People's Conference and which the Negotiating Committee

has assured will be accepted by the working committee of States People's Conference.

1. The basic and fundamental principles of the new constitution for the State as per document attached (A).
2. The formation of the Drafting Committee and its composition as per document attached (B).
3. The formation and composition of constitution making body as per document attached (C).
4. The formation of the new Interim Government as per document attached (D).
5. It was further agreed that His Highness will have full support of the State People's Conference in regard to his decision in respect of the proposal of the union of the State with any other State or group of States or for the merger of the State or any part thereof with any other territories.

**DOCUMENT A**

1. It has been agreed that the New Constitution for the State of Bhopal shall be based on the system of "Constitutional Monarchy" which means that the Ruler shall function through constitutional channels as prescribed in the Constitution and shall abide by the provisions of the Constitution. He shall pledge himself to protect and preserve the Constitution that may be duly promulgated and announced by him and under his authority in full consultation with the representatives of all important political parties in the State.

   The following fundamental and basic principles under which the new Constitution shall be framed have been agreed to by the Negotiating Committee of the States People's Conference of Bhopal appointed by the States People's Conference and consisting of Messrs:

   1. Enayatullah Khan Tarzi Mashriqi
   2. Lal Singh

3. Zahoor Hashmi
4. Kamta Prasad
5. Mahmood Husain

and with plenipotentiary powers, which will be duly ratified by the working committee of the States People's Conference, and the ratification thereof over the signatures, of the President and Secretary of the States People's Conference will be sent to Hon'ble the Prime Minister without delay.

2. The Constitution shall receive the assent of the ruler and shall be promulgated by him.

3. All executive powers of the State shall vest in His Highness the Ruler. All Legislation shall require the assent of the Ruler before it becomes law.

4. There shall be a Council of Minister to aid an advise the Ruler in the exercise of his executive functions.

5. The Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly.

6. A Minister who for six months is not a member of the legislature shall cease to be a Minister at the expiration of that period.

7. There shall be a Prime Minister at the head of the Council of Ministers.

8. The Prime Minister and other Minister shall be appointed by His Highness and shall hold office during the Ruler's pleasure.

9. The Prime Minister shall submit to His Highness all decisions of the Council relating to the administration of the affairs of the State and proposals of legislation and shall furnish such information as His Highness may demand.

10. All functions relating to the Union subjects, Defence and External Relations including the functions of the State's External Affairs Department which relate to all matters external to the State and to the relationship of the State

with the Union, provinces and other States, shall be reserved to His Highness and shall be exercised in his discretion.

11. (a) No motion shall lie in the legislature concerning the Union subjects.

    (b) The Government may move such a motion with the previous assent of the Ruler.

    (c) His Highness may consult his Council of Ministers or the legislature on any matters relating to the Union subjects or may consult the Chief Justice on any legal question in regard to these subjects.

12. The protection of the fundamental rights and the rights of minorities shall be a subject reserved to the Ruler.

13. (i) His Highness will appoint:

    (a) Attorney General.

    (b) Auditor General.

    (c) The Chief Justice and Judges of the High Court.

    (d) The Chairman and members of the Public Service Commission.

    (e) Qazi Mufti and Dharam Shastri, and

    (f) Members of the personal staff.

    (ii) His Highness may appoint a Royal Commission to suggest:

    (a) Improvements in various branches of administration, and

    (b) Ways and means for the economic uplift of the people of the state.

14. His Highness may issue ordinances which will cease to have effect six weeks after their presentation to the legislature.

15. His Highness will:

    (a) Summon the legislature.

    (b) Prorogue the legislature, and

    (c) Dissolve the legislature.

16. (a) The Ruler's Privy Purse shall be fixed according to Rules already laid down.

    (b) A minimum and a maximum shall be fixed. The minimum will be based on the revenues of 1946, 1947, and 1948. (Minimum 10%, Maximum according to rules at present in force. 1% for the Heir-apparent with a maximum in accordance with rules governing the Privy Purse).

    (c) Any special demand over and above the sum fixed above shall be presented for the vote of the legislature.

    (d) The Privy Purse shall be a charge on the revenues of the State.

17. (a) Succession to the Throne shall be governed by the Succession Law at present in force.

    (b) No motion affecting the Succession Law shall lie in the legislature.

18. No motion shall lie in the legislature which

    (a) Affects the integrity, status and boundaries of the State or which raises a question of affiliation of the State to any external territory:

    (b) Extends in the territories of the State the jurisdiction of any external authority, executive, legislative or judicial. Provided that the Government may bring in such a motion on the express assent of the Ruler given in writing.

19. No bill amending or altering the Constitution shall be introduced in the legislature save by the Government after obtaining the express previous assent of the Ruler in writing. Such a bill shall require a three-fourths majority.

20. No motion shall lie in the legislature which affects the fundamental rights of the people of the State and the rights of minorities, save by the Government with the consent of the Ruler

21. No motion shall lie in the legislature in regard to subjects reserved to His Highness.

22. His Highness may consult his Council of Ministers in regard to the exercise of the special or reserved powers or send any such matter for the advice of the legislature.

23. In case of grave emergency whereby the security of the State is threatened and the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, His Highness may, by proclamation, declare that his functions shall, to such extent as may be specified in the proclamation, be exercised by him in his discretion for a period not exceeding such time as may be fixed in the proclamation, but in no case more than six months at a time.

24. All fundamental rights shall be guaranteed.

25. (a) The Ruler will confer titles of honour upon, and grant jagirs, orders or medals for conspicuous service to his subjects.

(b) The precedence amongst offices etc. shall be regulated by His Highness in his discretion.

(c) No Motion shall lie in the legislature in respect of the Ruler's prerogatives of mercy, justice, clemency and grant of exemptions from

(1) Customs duty

(2) Arms licences, and

(3) Taxation,

26. 1. The Ruler's person shall be above and he shall not be subject to any taxation. The ruler shall continue to enjoy all personal prerogatives, rights and privileges.

2. The members of the Ruling Family (Ruler's consorts, the Heir-Apparent, Ruler's other sons and daughters, Ruler's grandsons, Ruler's brothers, Ruler's real uncles, Rule's brothers' sons, and Ruler's son-in-law) shall enjoy such privileges which they have been enjoying at present.

27. The Legislative Assembly shall be the electoral college for the election of the State's representatives to the Union Legislature.

## DOCUMENT B

**The Drafting Committee**

1. His Highness will appoint a small Drafting Committee to draft a Constitution strictly in accordance with Document A from amongst the members of important political parties.
2. His Highness will appoint a President.
3. There will be no voting. The difference of opinion between the members will be submitted to His-Highness.

## DOCUMENT C

**Constitution Making Body**

1. His Highness will appoint a constitution making body representing important political parties in the State for considering the Draft Constitution submitted by the Drafting committee.
2. An independent president will be appointed by His Highness.
3. The constitutional advisers will be appointed by His Highness.
4. The constitution making body will submit to His Highness their proposals in regard to the future constitution of the State which will be formulated strictly in accordance with the basic and fundamental principles as per Document A, for the Royal assent.

## DOCUMENT D

**New Interim Government**

1. A new Interim Government shall be formed consisting of nine Ministers.

2. The present Prime Minister and Finance Minister shall remain.
3. Out of the seven popular Minister, four shall be from the State People's Conference.
4. The Interim Government shall function according to the existing Constitution.

| | |
|---|---|
| File No. 241, B-99 | 1926 |
| File No. 21, B-218 | 1933 |
| File No. 81, B-176 | 1932 |
| File No. 25, B-175 | 1933 |
| File No. 297, B-177 | 1933 |
| File No. 260, B-193 | 1934 |
| File No. 328, B-190 | 1934 |
| File No. 330, B-190 | 1934 |
| File No. 68, B-203 | 1934 |
| File No. 46, B-218 | 1934 |
| File No. 26, B-218 | 1936 |
| File No. 174, B-232 | 1936 |
| File No. 177, B-232 | 1936 |
| File No. 176, B-232 | 1937 |
| File No. 33, B-218 | 1936 |
| File No. 8, B-242 | 1937 |
| File No. 18, B-242 | 1937 |
| File No. 15, B-242 | 1938 |
| File No. 9, B-242 | 1938 |
| File No. 288, B-269 | 1939-40 |
| File No. 21, B-289 | 1941 |
| File No. 10, B-270 | 1940 |
| File No. 21, B-270 | 1940 |
| File No. 16, B-270 | 1940 |

| | |
|---|---|
| File No. 11, B-270 | 1940 |
| File No. 14, B-267 | 1939-40 |
| File No. 21, B-289 | 1941 |
| File No. 8, B-267 | 1939-41 |
| File No. 27, B-287 | 1941 |
| File No. 245, B-281 | 1940 |
| File No. 399, B-276 | 1940 |
| File No. 719, B-296 | 1941 |
| File No. 35, B-328 | 1944 |
| File No. 47, B-328 | 1944 |
| File No. 34, B-328 | 1944 |
| File No. 20, B-328 | 1944 |
| File No. 19, B-342 | 1944 |
| File No. 24, B-242 | 1944 |
| File No. 135, B-343 | 1944 |

# Bibliography

**BOOKS CONSULTED**


Chapter One:

1. Bhopal State Gazetteer (1968) Ed. By Luard.
2. Bhopal State Gazetteer (Revised) 1974-Unpublished MS.
3. A Historical Sketch of Central Provinces and Berar by V.N. Aiyar.
4. A History of India (Sir. H. Eliot) Vol. IV.
5. Malcolm's Memoirs of Central India.
6. The Later Moghals—Vol. II—by William Irvine.
7. A New History of the Marathas—by G. S. Sardesai Vol. II.
8. History of the Marathas by Grant Duff—Vol. I.
9. A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sandas—by Aitchson Vol. IV.

Chapter Two:

1. Mutiny Papers—Descriptive List—Vol IV.
2. (Published by National Archives—Bhopal).
3. "An account of my life" by Sultan Jahan Begum, Vol. I.
4. "Tarikh-e-ulka, Bhopal", A booklet in Urdu (Central Library, Bhopal).

Chapter Three:
1. Bhopal Administration of Report 1906-07.
2. Bhopal Administration Report—1930.
3. Indore District Gazetteer—1971.
4. 'Nai Rah'—Hindi Weekly 1950.
5. 'Veer Arjun'—New Delhi.

C. *Memoranda, Tracts, Phamphlets, etc.*

1. Memorandum (a) presented to Sardar Patel.
2. Memorandum.
   *(Of the Congress Committee)*
3. Memorandum.
   *(Of the Negotiating Committee)*
4. Memorandum of Bhopal Legislative Council 1953 presented to States' Reorganisation Commission.
5. Photosat of creation of Wakf.
6. Photostat of Agreement (Standstill) on air field.

D Libraries visited and out of print newspapers, periodicals, some rare volumes of memoirs, histories, letters read:

1. Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi.
2. M. P. Secretariat Library, Bhopal.
3. M. P. Gazetteers Library, Bhopal
4. Old Bhopal Secretariat Library.

E A closed period file on Bhopal Affairs (1947-48), in National Archieves, New Delhi, with the permission of Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

# Glossary

**GLOSSARY**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ahimsa* | Non-violence |
| *Aman* | peace |
| *Badsha* | king |
| *Bania* | member of the business community |
| *Bapu* | father, name often given to Mahatma Gandhi |
| *Bhang* | an intoxicant |
| *Bhangi* | a scavenger |
| *Bharat* | India |
| *Chamar* | a leather worker |
| *Charkha* | spinning wheel |
| *Chapati* | thin, flat, unleavened bread |
| *Crore* | unit of measurement which is equal to ten millions |
| *Dal* | association |
| *Darshan* | sight of a venerated person or deity |
| *Desh* | country |
| *Dharma* | religion |
| *Dharna* | a sit-down strike |
| *Ghat* | bank of a river |
| *Goonda* | hooligan |
| *Goondaism* | hooliganism |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Guru* | teacher |
| *Hakumat* | rule |
| *Hartal* | stoppage of work |
| *Himsa* | violence |
| *Islam* | Mohammedianism |
| *Inquilab* | revolution |
| *Istri* | a woman |
| *Jai* | victory |
| *Jalsa* | a public procession |
| *Jamait* | an association |
| *Jatha* | numerous persons |

# Index

## C

H



I



J

## R



## S

## Y



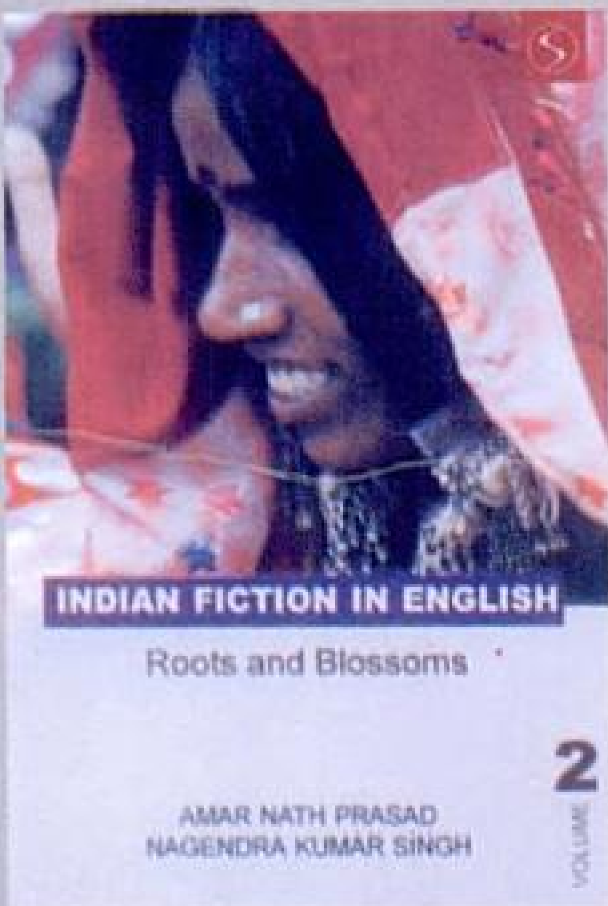
## Z

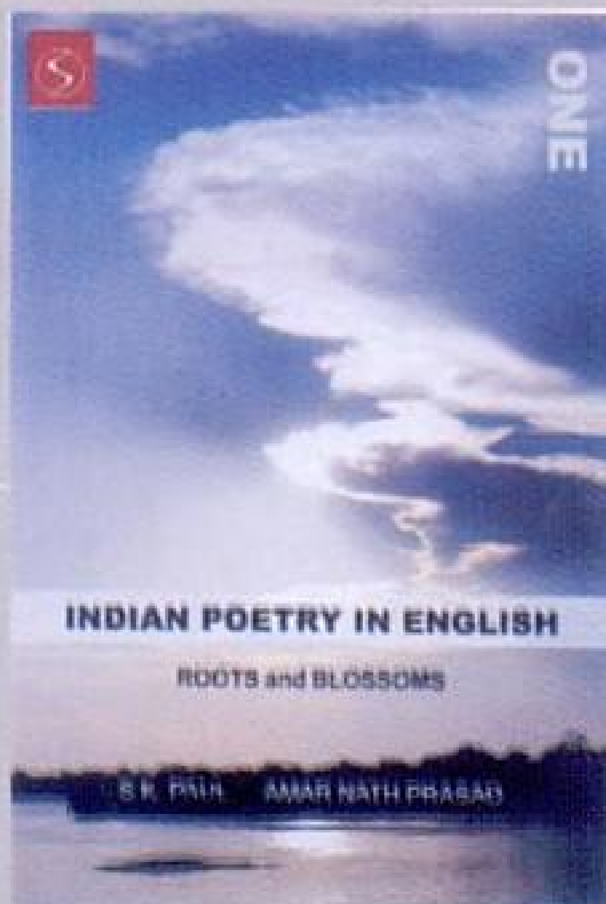
**Dr. S.R. Bakshi** is Ph.D; D. Litt in Modern Indian History and is the author of several works on Indian nationalism and freedom movement. He has deep links with numerous institutions of research. He is the participant in national and international seminars. He is at present engaged in constitutional developments covering the periods of East India Company and India under the Crown.

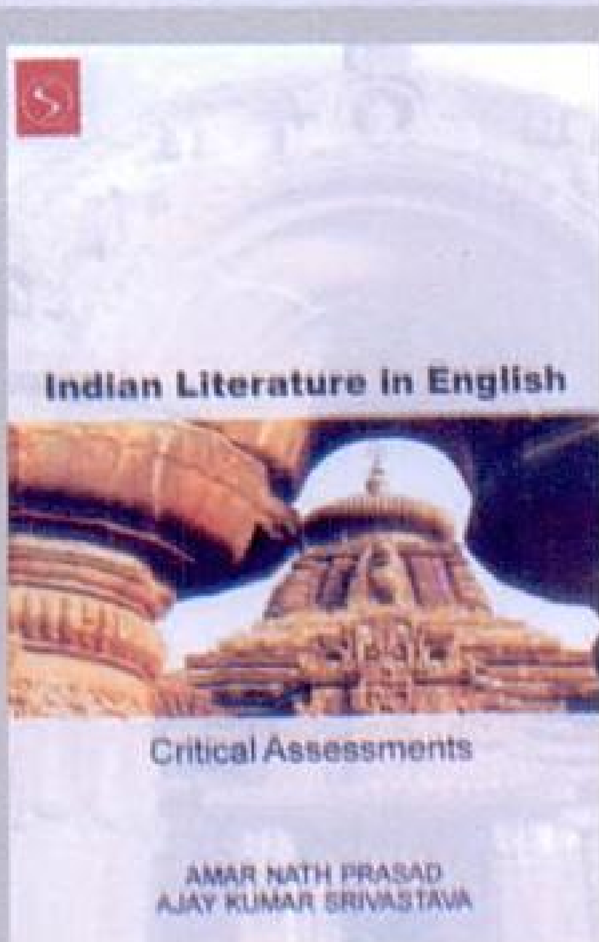
**Shri. O.P. Ralhan** is a well-known author of several works of Indian nationalism and freedom movement. He is an expert in the History of Punjab and political parties in Indian rule-continent. His writings are very useful for researchers, statesmen and students in India and abroad.

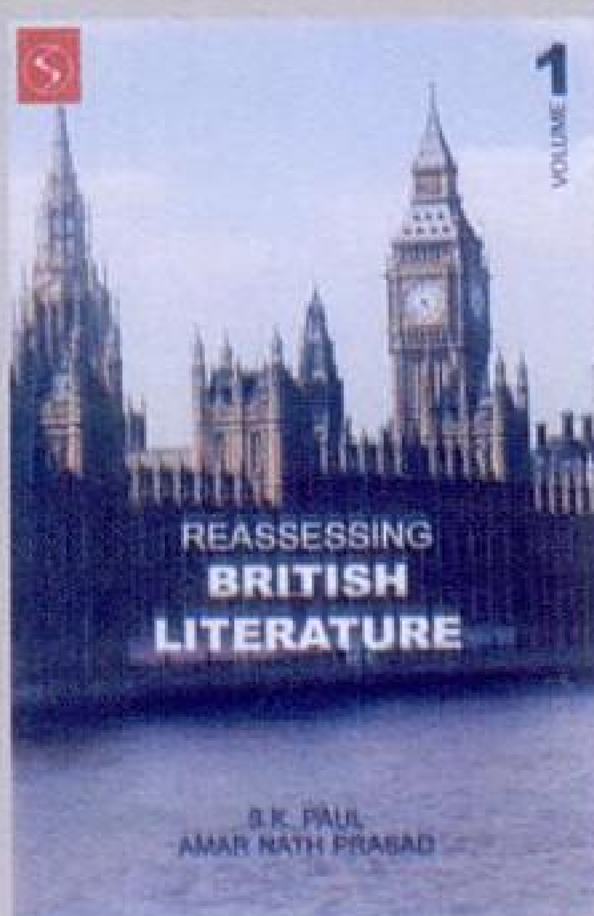
**ISBN-81-7625-806-7 (Set)**
**2007, Size-Demy**

Other
Related Books
from
*Sarup & Sons*




Jacket Design by J.M.S. Rawat

*Sarup & Sons*
PUBLISHERS
4740/23, ANSARI ROAD, DARYA GANJ, NEW DELHI-110002
PHONES: 23281029, 23244664, 41010989
FAX: 011-23277098
e-mail: sarupandsonsin@hotmail.com

ISBN 81-7625-806-7
9788176258067
Rs. 4500
( Set of 4 Volumes)